



DO YOU HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE YOUR DESTINY?











Available 09.03.2010



www.finalfantasy13game.com

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CHARACTER DESIGN: TETSUYA NOMURA

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FRORT



THE SABOTEUR

Tips for all the toughest Perks, plus how to blow up a cow. See page 80 for all that and more!

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Why this new romp to Hell and back is pure



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The most violent dose of sci-fi you're likely to get for some time?



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The sequel nobody expected starring the two burliest life-partners since Tango & Cash.



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Will this Bermuda Triangle adventure vanish wihout a trace?



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Might as well jump? We'll see about that. The latest Guitar Hero title thrashed.



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The world's biggest RPG turned inside-out!

FINAL FANTASY

SUBSCRIBE NOW! CALL 136 116 AND SAVE 50% OFF THE REGULAR COVER PRICE! SEE PAGE 30!





BORM -

BETRAYED

REVENGE

REVENGE

REVENGE

REVENGE

REVENGE.

REVENGE

MARCH 2010

WWW.GODOFWAR.COM



Strong violence, sexual references and nudity









WELCOME!

've never read a story about how the second-hand car market is having a negative impact on new car sales. If somebody else buys my car from me Ford won't see a cent. Ford, like any other car manufacturer, gets to sell a car once. It knows that.

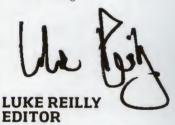
You might be the first person to read this magazine. You might have bought it yourself, with your own cash. If you did, we appreciate

it. We like our jobs. They pay our mortgages. But maybe you're just on the bog at a mate's place and noticed this magazine perched on the windowsill. We know we won't see any money from the second, third, fourth and fifth people who read this magazine – but that's just how it works. Thanks for reading anyway.

Developers and games publishers see things differently. I understand why they don't like the pre-owned games market, but consumers do. They like them because they are cheaper. It's that simple.

Publishers, then, must find a way to accept it and strike a balance. Goods can be exchanged for money, and vice versa. That's how our economy works. Would you buy, say, twice as many games if they were half the cost? I would. If the price of games fell faster, the price of pre-owned games would have to fall as well. With pre-owned games fetching less, consumers would be less inclined to trade them in the first place – but they'd still benefit from the reduced cost of new games. Consumers would be buying new games for the same price they would've previously paid for pre-owned ones.

Just a thought.



PSN: Capt_Flashheart PLAYING: HEAVY RAIN WANTING: GRAN TURISMO 5, RED DEAD REDEMPTION

OPS ON: BEST SECOND HAND PURCHASE



STEPHANIE GOH

Shot glasses. They came from Salvos, and I thought that someone had drawn on them with a permanent marker. Turns out they were made that way. They're actually pretty cool!

PSN: TBA
Playing: Final Fantasy XIII
Wanting: Prince of Persia



PAUL TAYLOR

CT-110, a.k.a. postie bike. Indestructible, iconic and dirt cheap to fill at the bowser, these and cockroaches will survive atomic blasts

PSN: paulgusta Playing: Final Fantasy XIII Wanting: Red Dead Redemption



JAMES COTTEE

Those new 3D glasses, though I didn't pay for them. I'm already a dollar ahead, and I'll keep being a dollar ahead everytime I go to the movies.

PSN: DrWho3987 Playing: Monster Hunter Freedom Unite Wanting: Medal of Honor



ADAM MATHEW

I scored a Rez 'Vibration Controller' at a games shop in Tokyo. I later realised it was the very definition of a 'pre-loved bargain'. Ewww.

PSN:YourmumsAWESOME Playing: Aliens vs Predator Wanting: Medal of Honor

PlayStation Official Magazine - Australia

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SHOUT OUTS: KJR :: Vinnie :: Nicole :: Luke Mathew :: Lucy :: MJ :: The ghost of Joel Graham's mo :: Vispi Bhopti ain't got time to bleed :: All the best El :: Ricey helping out in a pinch :: Rasmus with a silent 'j'

SIDER





12TOP TEN
The 10
PSone games you d
download and play

Gaming's latest and greatest

PS3: IT'S ALSO ACASH REGISTE

Selling it bits off

Recent sales figures from GfK Retail and Technology Australia has shown that 318,000 PS3s were sold in 2009. The mighty console had a 27 per cent increase of sales growth over the previous calendar year, well ahead of its nearest competitor. Almost 30 per cent of all PS3's sold have been the new streamlined 'slim' model since it launched on September 3 last year.

"These results clearly show a positive response from Australian consumers to the new PS3 model," said Michael Ephraim, Managing Director SCE Australia and New Zealand. "Available at a more affordable price [this has resulted] in a massive uptake as the ultimate game and interactive entertainment system for the home."

That's a lot of consoles sold. If you also count software (excluding PlayStation Store) and peripherals, PlayStation generated \$394 million of revenue. Incredibly, more PS2s were sold in 2009, bringing the final total of PlayStation 2 consoles in Australia to 2.5 million. That's one PS2 per nine people in this country alone.

PlayTV also performed well, shifting 36,000 units between

its launch on November 26 to the year's end. The unit supports your PlayStation's functionality as a media hub - PS3 is Australia's most popular Blu-ray player, as more than 75 per cent of households use a PS3 as their BD player.

2010 will bring 3D games through system software updates, as well as an on-demand movie delivery service through PSN.

Australia also has 604,000 PSPs on the loose, including the newly released Go.

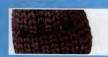
It all means good things for owners. More consoles equals more games.



11FLOWCHART
How's your
Ai? We break it down
for you and show your
it's probably grap



18 THE WORLD IN PS3
The events that



24 ANGRY
Riding a rare high after all
the kudos he received from

DRINKS:DUAL-SHOCKED, NOT STIRRED

Love to game? Feeling thirsty? Try Mana Bar, the first bar in Australia, if not the world, where you can play the latest videogames and order a stunning alcoholic beverage (or soft drink if you're designated driver, or just don't feel like boozing).

Located in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, and quite possibly open by the time you're reading this, Mana Bar promises "a stylish geek chic interior design" with playable console systems. The brainchild of four Brisbane lads, Guy 'Yug' Blomberg, Pras Moorthy, Shay Leighton and the internet's Ben 'Yahtzee' Croshaw, Mana Bar is free to enter, though you'd better be quick as it seats 50 and the games are free to play as well.

We're hopeful that they tether those controllers to the console, and have some ingenious cocktail names. We can only imagine good nights fuelled by a round of Drake's Fortunes, followed by a Dante's Inferno. Just watch out for the John Woo Stranglehold. It's even more potent than a Liberty City Iced Tea, or a fireworks-behind-your-eyeballs Bayonetta. Traditionalists will love the Assassin's Mead, or the house Red Faction.







WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



Goregasm Sega gets AVP out as God intended it; bloody as.

Boomstick
The fully
powered-up
shottie in
BioShock 2



Bubbies!
Dante's and
Heavy Rain turn



out to be chock full of boob.

No Motion
God of War III
confirmed to
not use motion
controls. Adam
is happy.



e motion s. Adam py.



Cheaters
One more
day, one more
MW2 exploit
appears.

Atkinson
Mr. Atkinson
calls all gamers
criminals and
dirty tricksters.



Crunch Time
The alleged
Rockstar San
Diego working
conditions.

WE CAN MAKE YOU SMARTER



et your expression to 'smug': videogames can make you smarter. According to Dr Ray Perez, a program officer at the US Office of Naval Research, videogames can help adults increase their 'fluid intelligence', meaning they can process information more quickly than non-gamers and also boost their problem-solving abilities.

"We have discovered by looking at various kinds of experience, particularly video games, that video game players perform 10 to 20 per cent higher than... non-game players, in terms of perceptual ability and cognitive ability," said Dr. Perez. "They can acquire objects faster; they can process visual information much faster than normal individuals."

Although one of the games cited that makes gamers into super-beings is Rise of Nations, a PC game, we'll happily recommend that you play more Uncharted, Modern Warfare 2 and Red Alert to improve your fluid intelligence. As we've previously reported, games can also improve elements of your eyesight as well as your hand-eye coordination. That. Is. Awesome.

IN SHORT...



Unfortunately, a large group of players have been blocked off *Uncharted 2's* multi-player mode due to an "error syncing player data" message. Naughty Dog say they're "working on it, and sorry..."



In an interesting interview, DICE's Patrick Bach has said that he believes "a lot of people on executive level" at EA see beating Modern Warfare (with Medal of Honor) as a goal.



Lara Croft has cemented her status as videogaming's leading lady by notching up an impressive six world record entries in the brand new edition of Guinness World Records 2010 Gamer's Edition.

Screentest and more

FACEPALM



The Watcher is watching, so watch it.

Today 6:03am · Comment · Like



Vulgrim Ah yes, I've heard you liked to watch. Pervert

9 hours ago · Report



Samael LMFAO. Schooled. How do you like that, Charred Council lapdog?

9 hours ago · Report



The Watcher
How ironic it is that a
demon soul collector
like Vulgrim - who takes
pleasure in collecting
'the young ones' - calls
moi a pervert. Why don't
you just go back to being
a shirty flea market for
War? Just remember; no
matter how much profit
you make, you'll never
be able to afford some
dignity.

8 hours ago · Report



Samael lololollololol oooooo. Touchy!
8 hours ago • Report



The Watcher As for you Samael, working for the Council is the sweetest gig in the galaxy. Much like human Council workers I do sweet bugger all while your tax dollars keep me happily scratching my incorporeal arse. Also, what's it like living chained in a hole anyway? Get out much?

7 hours ago · Report



Samael If I had a heart, you'd have just broken it, Watcher. Speaking of which, who's up for getting me three takeaway hearts? I'm bloody starving.

7 hours ago · Report



Vulgrim I've got a shipment of half-chewed human pancreases coming in next week.

6 hours ago • Report



War I will secure you these hearts, Samael. In return you will tell me who The Destroyer is, what his mysterious goal is, and where he may be hiding.

4 hours ago · Report



The Watcher Gee, War. I wonder if he'll be the guy out destroying everything. I have a psychic hunch that his ultimate goal is to destroy. Maybe if we just follow the path of destruction we'll stumble upon his secret hideout.

2 hours ago · Report

SCREENTEST: Your favourite games as movies

STREET FIGHTER IV

Because moviegoers didn't learn the first time...

The Director

Uwe Boll's mentally-challenged cat

The Plot...

...will make no sense at all, will do no justice to any of the characters in the videogame, and shall focus on Guile (minus his bitchin' hairdo). Ryu and Ken will be hustlers, Sagat will be an arms dealer for some reason, and Dhalsim will be a doctor that turns Blanka into a Z-movie monster.

The Pitch

It's like the 1994 Street Fighter: The Movie but 'more good-er', and pitched to younger audiences that weren't quite alive enough to be traumatised by the original.

Green Light or Development Hell?

Utter green light. As long as your preview trailer alludes to a Chun-Li shower scene like the one in *Street Fighter: The Animated Movie*, you'll rake in millions of dollars from horny fools. This license is flypaper for idiots – hell, the original made *three times* its production costs, and it was a soggy shit sandwich.

Best Scene:

A.N. Official: Colonel, have you lost your mind?
Colonel William F. Guile: No!
You've lost your balls!

The Cast:

Van Damme as the quintessential Guile that isn't anything like Guile, both in nature and appearance.

Lady Gaga as Cammy. Why? Because she has zero martial arts training – it makes *perfect* sense...

Ben Kingsley as Bison. Like Raul Julia, Bison must be played by a decent actor suckered into this tripe.

Owen Wilson as Ken Masters. Note to self: bulk buy more steroids.

Mike Tyson as Balrog. Iron Mike is always down for a hilarious cameo.













NUMBER CRUNCHING



The number of copies of *Modern*Warfare 2 has shipped so far. Sucker
just prints money.

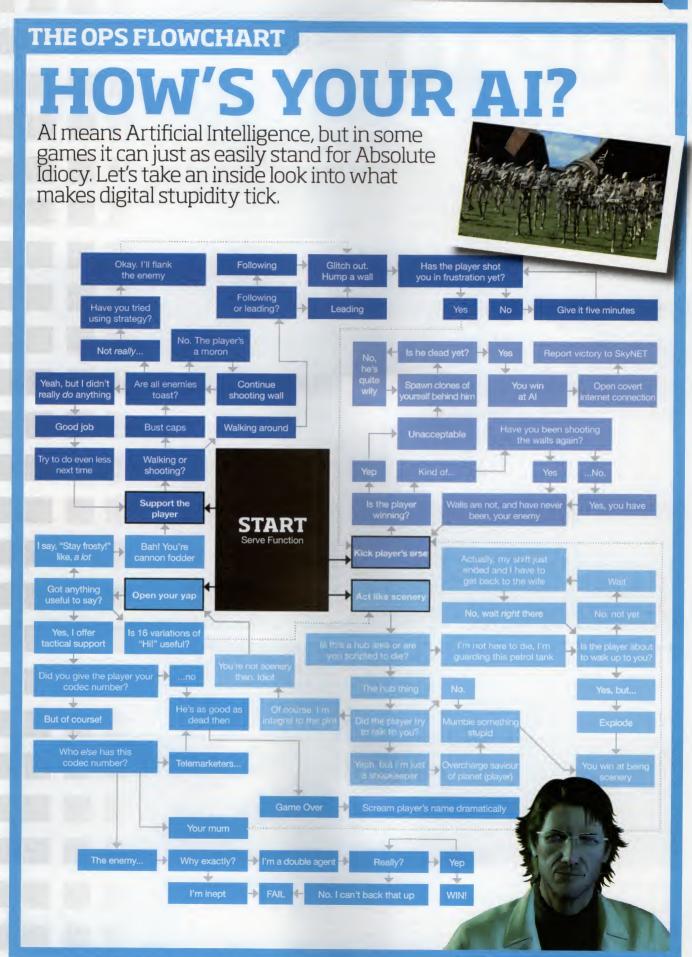


SEPARATED AT BIRTH

NO. 13 Karl Urban – grizzled gunslinger John Marston

Who is Karl Urban? He is best known for playing Éomer in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and Dr. Leonard McCoy in the 2009 film *Star Trek*. He also played Vaako in *The Chronicles of Riddick* and the Russian assassin Kirll in *The Bourne Supremacy*. Put this Kiw in the sun for a year (and a knife fight) and he's a dead ringer for Marston.







TOP 10

DESIRABLE PSONE DOWNLOADS

(THAT YOU'LL PROBABLY ONLY WANT TO PLAY ONCE. TOPS)

Soon, very soon, PS3 owners may have the chance to access a premium online service, with unlimited streaming retro games on demand. This could be an incredible opportunity... to remind us just how lucky we are to live in the 21st Century. Here are some famous (and infamous) games of the PSone era that are probably best left to Rest In Peace.



STAR WARS: MASTERS OF TERÄS KÄSI

You know how George Lucas has this huge bureaucratic staff in place to ensure that any product that bears the *Star Wars* name meets certain minimal standards of quality? Sometimes they hump the bunk. Even before Jar Jar Binks scarred our eyes, the gaming world suffered this tepid 3D fighter. *Masters of Teräs Käsi* is LucasArts's answer to a question no-one asked. An extra special kind of bad this game was.



QUAKE II

This one would be worth it just for the morbid curiosity value. Not that there's anything wrong with making ambitious first-person shooters for consoles. The low frame rate on *Perfect Dark* was *part of the charm*. And we certainly don't have anything against id; the world simply would not be the same without *Doom* (and *Commander Keen*). But *Quake II* on the PSone was a bridge too far. The equivalent today would be trying to get *Crysis* to work on the Wii: not a pretty sight.



SPEC OPS: STEALTH PATROL

Now that an incredibly wicked series reboot for this special forces third/first person action franchise is on the way, you may be sorely tempted to see where it all began. Do so, and you will scold your eyes. Crumby graphics, horrid frame-rate, glitchy environments, and painfully simplistic mission objectives are assembled with the care and grace of a baby drooling on its blocks. We're so used to good textures these days, we've forgotten what bad ones look like. This is a refresher course.



FINAL FANTASY VII

Everyone has that one game that they fondly remember. If FFVII wasn't your first love, no amount of studied interest is going to give it the same place in your heart. Even if you can get past the über-dated character models, you cannot escape the spoilers — for instance, there's an entire website called 'Aries Dies'. Oh, and then there's the time factor, too. If you've got a spare 100 hours to burn through on a whim, then chances are you're in prison, or chronically unemployed.



PARAPPA THE RAPPER

It was revolutionary! It was hilarious! It was a decade ahead of it's time! Yet this iconoclastic artistic collaboration from edgy New York artist Rodney Greenblat and oddball game designer Masaya Matsuura only had, like, six songs in it. That seemed like good value at the time, but only because the punishing difficulty meant it took forever to get one's timing down. Parappa is still kind of charming, but tastes have changed. Only his moral is timeless: 'I gotta believe!'



ELMO'S NUMBER JOURNEY

'What kind of a game could possibly score 3%?' you may ask yourself. This is the answer. Elmo runs through hedge mazes finding giant numbers, and knocking them over. For the full edutainment experience, be sure to check out *Elmo's Letter Adventure*, too. No amount of research could tell us just how many copies this game actually sold. Not many, we're figuring. This paragraph was brought to you by the number 5.



RESIDENT EVIL

Everyone remembers how the first Resident Evil reinvented the horror genre, and brought zombies back into the mainstream after a decade in the wilderness. Unsurprisingly, no-one remembers the God-awful acting, the interminable loading screens, and the pole-up-your-arse control scheme. After repeating those flaws for two sequels running, we're beginning to wonder if Resident Evil 4 was a fluke.



WIPFOLLT

One poor soul writing for this magazine actually went out and bought the game disc for this one, long, long ago. Sure, it was mind-blowing when released. But when you're already accustomed to its superior sequels (2097, Wip3out), you can only notice the flaws. For instance, your anti-gravity rocket car will grind to a complete stop if you so much as touch the walls of the track. Only worth sampling for the laughably dated dance music – and the RAGE.



BMXXXX

An open world Dave Mirra BMX sequel where completing sub-quests earns you tickets to a low-fi, low-res peep show? Willikers! Crass sexism only works if you can pull it off with a nod and wink, and a bit of class. This had crassness without smut, jokes without laughs, and above all, sizzle without steak. It was really controversial at the time, though, so curiosity may yet kill your proverbial cat. Wait a minute. No, this was on PS2. Darn.



THE FLINTSTONES: BEDROCK BOWLING

Originally conceived of as a 10 pin bowling game, somewhere along the line Mr. Management decided the game would sell more copies if it was literally impossible to lose your life and fail a level. So they changed it to a game where the members of everybody's favourite modern stone-age family would stand in giant coconut halves, and slide through crude obstacle courses. Morbidly fascinating to watch, this is the definitive 'train wreck' gaming experience.





AVAILABLE ON DVD FEBRUARY 17

"Slick and blessed with good action instincts"

ANIME NEWS NETWORK

© Tite Kubo/Shueisha, TV TOKYO, dentsu, Pierrot © BMP 2007

BORDERS.







MADMAN.COM.AU







INfocus

JUST CAUSE 2

Balls-to-the-wall doesn't even begin to describe the action in Avalanche's follow-up to its highly-ambitious debut. Who knew a grappling hook and a parachute were all you needed?















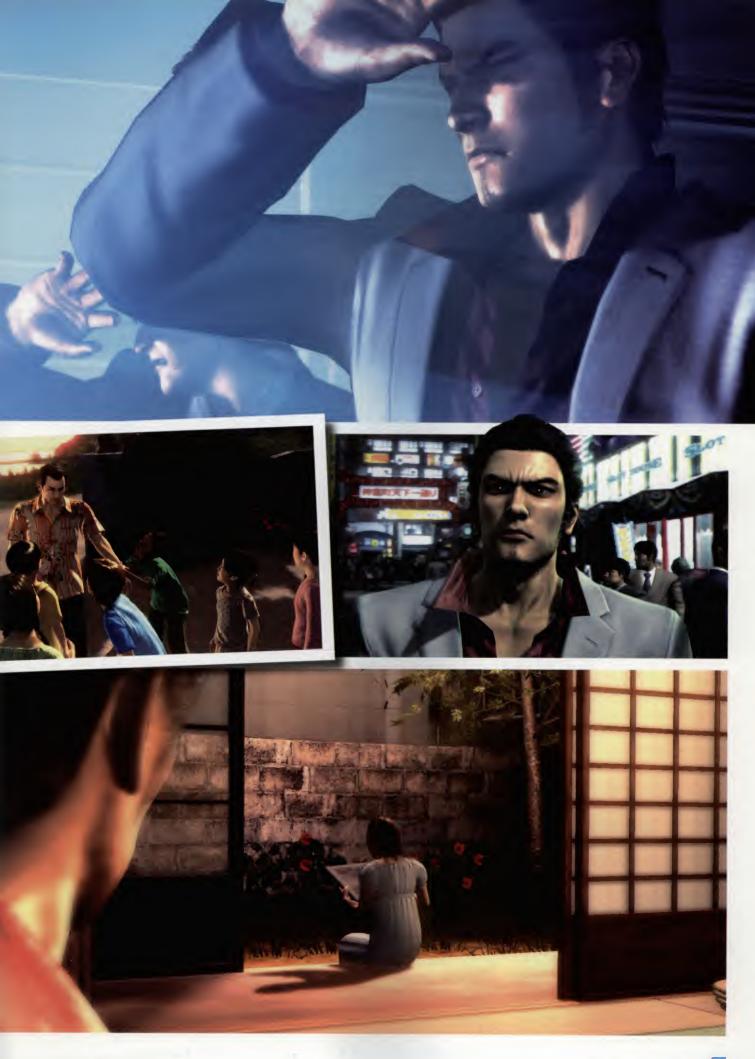


YAKUZA 3

The highly-respected underworld series heads to PS3s outside of Japan for the first time in March. As you can see, it looks absolutely spectacular. Heavy Rain, eat your heart out.







ARQUND THE WORLD IN PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



ITALY, EUROPE RED CARD EFFORT

An Italian father has been knifed after offering his son some pointers on FIFA. An argument broke out, leading the father to turn off his son's TV as punishment. The 16-year-old then went to the kitchen and returned to stab his father in the neck. The father is in a stable condition and the police have made an arrest. Apparently his parents bought FIFA instead of GTA because it was "too violent".



NURBURGRING, GERMANY

LAP BATTLE, COMMENCE!

Toyota is tapping into the PlayStation generation with a GPS-based track timing system developed with the makers of the *GTS*. The system, which was trialled on a race-prepared Lexus IS-F supercar at Germany's Nurburgring, allows the driver to record a lap time on a real race track, then play it back on Gran Tursimo. Awesome idea!



BEIJING, CHINA FISH IN A BARREL

In an effort to "purify the social environment", China recently started a crackdown on the spreading of pornographic contents through the Internet. The government received more than 90,000 tip-offs about porn sites and rewarded 215 whistle blowers with cash. Easiest. Money. In the world.



SEOUL, KOREA GETTIN' (VIRTUALLY) PAID

During a recent court case where two gamers were accused of illegally profiting by trading in-game currency for real cash (i.e. gold farming), South Korea's apex court not only acquitted the accused but also ruled that in-game or virtual currency is to be treated on par with real currency. This is hailed as a landmark ruling that will impact future laws.



CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA GAMING ON THE RISE

The video games industry in Australia could soon be worth more than DVD sales and box office takings combined. Figures released the iGEA revealed the video games industry notched up a record \$2.05 billion in total sales during the 2009 calendar year. Gaming: it reigns supreme.

INTERNATIONAL CHARTS







ELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

FEBRUARY 2010



MAG GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



BioShock 2 GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: 2K



Dante's Inferno GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: EA



Aliens Vs. Predator GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



Heavy Rain GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



Star Ocean GENRE: RPG DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



White Knight Chronicles
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ



Guitar Hero: Van Halen GENRE: MUSIC
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



MARCH 2010



BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger



Resonance of Fate GENRE: RPG DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



ArcaniA

Mafia II



Yakuza 3 GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



God of War III

Battlefield:

GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

Bad Company 2

MotoGP 09/10

GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: THO

Just Cause 2

Lost Planet 2

APRIL 2010

TBC 2010

Red Dead

GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

Redemption
GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

Gran Turismo 5

GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO

ENRE: RPG ISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

Castlevania: Lords of Shadow ENRE: ACTION ISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO ANDAI PARTNERS



Singularity GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



Final Fantasy XIV GENRE: RPG DISTRIBUTOR: TBA



Agent GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR



Max Payne 3 GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR



ModNation Racers GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



Split/Second GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: MADMAN



Enslaved GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS



Dead Rising 2 GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: THQ



Metal Gear Solid Rising GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



Super Street Fighter IV ENRE: FIGHTER
ISTRIBUTOR: THQ



L.A. Noire GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR



Naughty Bear

RAGE GENRE: SHOOTER DISTRIBUTOR: EA



Clash of the Titans GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



R.U.S.E. GENRE: RTS DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT



Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



GENRE: RACING
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



Medal of Honor



Alpha Protocol NRE: RPG STRIBUTOR: SEGA



GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



Crysis 2 ENRE: SHOOTER



Majin The Fallen Realm GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



Tony Hawk: Ride



Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



"They are bad games. because they were bad games." Activision's boss Bobby Kotick laments the woeful ratings of the last few Spider-Man games. Accepting you have a problem is the first step.



'PlayStation' are poison. kill. They once put my face on a game, 'you've got to find Chavez to kill him.'" Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez makes up a lie. The 'kill Chavez' game? Mercenaries 2.



"The PS3 hardware has a very high peak performance. The better Polyphony Digital's Kazunori Yamauchi confesses GT5 uses roughly 80 per cent of the PS3's power.



I feel blessed." Nolan North upon having an entire award named after him by site Giant Bomb. The category? 'The Northies', for best voice acting in a game. North, of course, took it home for Uncharted 2.

AUSTRALIAN CHART

Source: GfK



Modern Warfare 2



Darksiders



Army of Two: The 40th Day



Assassin's Creed II



Avatar



Bayonetta



FIFA 10



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves



MX vs ATV Reflex



Ashes Cricket 2009



Opinion



FILL MY SACK WITH

PIGLETS



66 The reward is usually something like **a funny hat**

ypothetical for ya'll: let's say that there is, in fact, an afterlife. Let's play pretend and say that it is everything you ever wanted and more.

So you lob up to the pearly gates, glimpsing frothy rivers of beer and busty, dusky-haired women riding skateboards naked (it's my thing, okay? Don't judge me, readers), when the old bloke at the door stops you with that familiar bouncer 'noneshall-pass' look and asks:

"Did you collect all the piglets?"
"I didn't know I had to collect
all the piglets..." you stammer, a
sinking feeling in the pit of your
stomach.

"It's optional," he replies, "But if you didn't, you have to spend eternity in Rooty Hill RSL. There's a chook raffle on right now."

Nightmarish, yes? Indeed, but that's the very feeling a whole lot of games have been giving your humble word janitor of late.

Example? Ratchet & Clank Future: A Crack in Time. For my money it's possibly the best of the series, but as is the way with platformers you need to do a lot of collecting. Bolts, weapon parts and even the mysterious Zoni can be nabbed as you and your robotic life partner hoon through space and time.

Now, if you're like me, you're a trifle lazy – so you don't really get all that excited about collecting things. We've got good reason to be unmotivated. The reward is usually something like a funny hat.

Not in this game, matey! If you haven't picked up all the Zoni you miss out on fighting and killing a boss character who is central to the story! Now this would be slightly less egregious if they'd told you up front – but the message you get is "Collect all the Zoni for a surprise."

A boss shouldn't be "a surprise", it's part of the story. Bing that it's part of the game's narrative it shouldn't be optional!

Right?

Assassin's Creed II has a similar deal with the Codex pages. You need to collect them all, but to do so requires bulk faffing about. If you've yet to play the second Creed adventure, keep an eye on the Codex count and try to get all of them in the map you're traversing, otherwise you'll be revisiting cities for bloody hours. It really stops the game dead.

Darksiders, an otherwise fine game, pulls a nasty swiftie on you as well. After you kill a whole bunch of monsters, then go through the Dark Throne level (which feels like playing Portal while a gibbon rabbit-punches you in the scrotum) you have to "revisit" a whole bunch of realms to assemble a sword that, inexplicably, isn't even mentioned until the three-quarter mark.

Look, I'm not naïve. I understand that sometimes a game needs to extend the adventure but would it be too much to ask to make it fun? These Easter egg hunts may bring to mind side-scrolling, 2D platformers but is that really what they're going for?

Uncharted 2 features treasure that can then be used to enhance the multiplayer experience. It's not a long single player game, but it's righteously fun and it never feels like you're doing the game equivalent of "busy work".

Of course, I'm the first person to have a sook when a title is too short, but I'd rather 10 fun hours than 40+ where a high percentage of it is going back to find stuff you didn't know needed finding. It's a cheap and unimaginative way for games to "double dip" and, like QuickTime, events should be given the arse.

In the meantime you might want to start collecting piglets.

Just in case.

Anthony O'Connor is a freelance videogame journalist who feels it's quite unfortunate for pigs that they taste so good.





SCREW THE OTIC

illions of years from now scienticians will be pondering the arse-print in my gaming chair. It'll baffle the finest brains among them. It will melt the logic-core of their Skynet overlord. The glorious double-bun formation forged in my lounge isn't so much an imprint, as the grand canyon is just a divot in the ground. No, my lounge lecacy is something else. There's an almost breathtaking majesty to it and, once discovered, I'm confident it'll also be a popular destination for tourists.

How - the pointdexters shall debate - could an otherwise upwardly-mobile human erode such a durable surface using only his sweet, sweet can? Well, let me explain myself from the grave, eggheads; I was a first generation videogamer who refused to stand for motion-based controllers. I also had the basic knowledge

66 Years of sci-fi cinema has conditioned me into thinking that we should be moving away from moving ""

of how a colostomy bag works. Mine was a golden era.

Which brings me to today's topic; colostomy bags are full of sh... no, wait - wrong topic. Let me start that again. Motion-based controls are full of shoddiness and I don't think that they're the proper evolution of videogaming. Years of sci-fi cinema has conditioned me into thinking that we should be moving away from moving.

Instead of making me flail about like a simpleton - or even twiddle my thumbs at all - my PS4 should jack into the back of my melon, a la The Matrix. I should be strapped into my PS5 via a Leonardo Da Vinci wheel and VR shades like The Lawnmower Man. I expect to materialise onto the motherboard of my PS6 wearing a dorky, neon stackhat like Tron. Why? Because one: I don't want to ever move my body unnecessarily, and two: bitches love

My disdain towards bodily locomotion can be summed up with the phrase 'bone-arsed laziness'. After a long day at work (commuting, walking, pretending to contribute to society) I'm tired. So very, very, tired. I therefore don't want to

spend my 'me time' physically slashing my on-screen sword with my entire being, or leaping off the lounge to curb stomp that boss in his genital weakspot. I want a button, or a thought process, that will initiate demon junk stomp. That way I can do it repeatedly, and not have to die of a stroke and earn a ridiculous obituary

I think you all see where I'm going here. Motion-based controls may be 'teh bombz' for the casual nitwits of the world. but I can't see them being much more than an annoyance for us hardcore. That's my down-to-earth/lounge opinion. I am hereby taking a stand (metaphorically, my legs lost feeling six hours ago) against the motioncontroller fad. They'll certainly be in the future, but they're not the future.

Think I'm crazy? Just cast your mind back to the scene in Back to the Future II, where the future kids call Marty McFly a 'baby' for using his hands to play a game. I submit to you that if you use your whole body to control a game in the future you'll be a goddamn foetus.

Adam Mathew wrote this wearing a stackhat.

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TGN com



score: 94

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"BlazBlue's online system puts titles like Street Fighter IV to shame"

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- GamingAge.com

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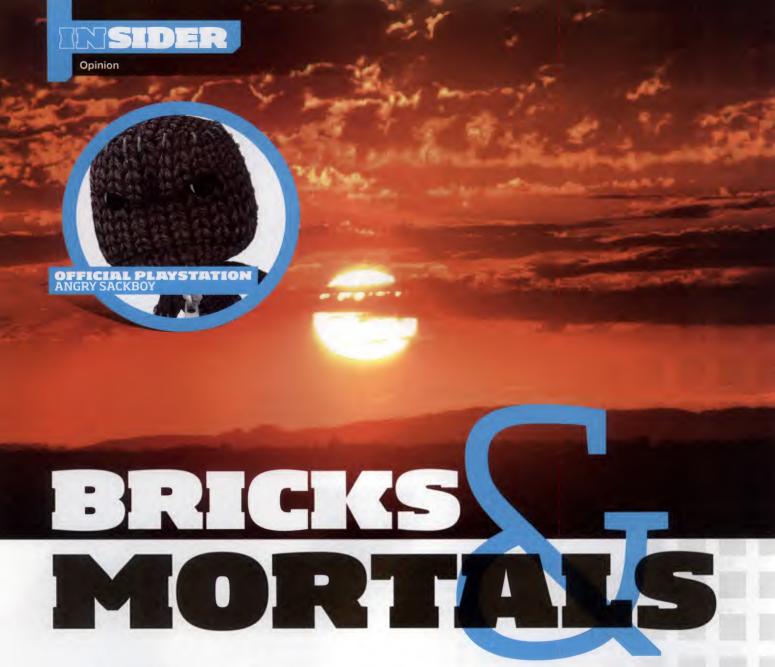












f my sources are correct, what Kaz has in mind for the new-and-improved PSN is a kind of Netflix-style subscription service. For your yearly fee you'd get access to a huge bank of downloadable games – old emulated PSone hits, like *Crash Bandicoot*,

16 Some of us would be happy to pay a small fee each time we felt like dabbling in the past **!!**

back when it was still made by Naughty Dog. Back when the series was good.

If this wild, hare-brained scheme succeeds, you could have an archive of thousands of games at your fingertips. You could indulge in every nostalgic whim at the press of a button.

It would be a pretty sweet deal, like cable TV, or satellite radio.

Yet there are some people out there in Internet Forum Land who are actually complaining about this. They're whining because you wouldn't actually 'own' any of these games. You'd only be renting them.

Well excuse me, princess.

In case you haven't noticed, you don't really own anything in this world. I'm not talking about property rights, the bedrock of our superior Western civilisation – 'possession is 9/10 of the law,' and all that. I'm talking about the simple, practical facts of life and matter: nothing lasts forever.

While your PS3 is far, far less likely to explode than an Xbox 360, it is not immortal. Its hard drive will fail. Its cooling fans will fail. Its disc-ejecting mechanism will fail. Eventually. That, or something else. It only takes one thing to go wrong to render the whole unit a brick. Chances are, that day won't come for many years. Our PS2s are still working. So is our PSone. Your PS3 will probably live a long and happy life, before being consigned to a box in the garage. But it could yet die. Horribly, and at any moment. Then all you'll be able to do is stare at your old games, and possibly sniff the inside of the instruction booklets.

Nothing escapes decay. Magnetic discs can be wiped or corrupted, or simply crash. DVDs and Blu-rays can shatter. Manuals and boxes can rot. All these things can be lost... or stolen! Or seized in messy divorce settlements. Or struck by lightning.

The earth could subside, and swallow your house whole. A meteor could strike from space.

And even if your precious things are not destroyed while you draw breath, one day you yourself will expire. Perhaps, as with the house-pets of Dethklok, you will move on to a better place – 'Hamburger Time.' But you can't take any of your plastic crap with you.

Oh, and here's one more inconvenient truth: old games never get played anyway. Because you're sick of them! Because gaming is a rapidly-evolving art form, and what's king poop today is horse crap tomorrow. And the day after that? Embarrassing.

So if the crew at Sony want to charge a subscription fee for access to old games, then let them. Some of us would be happy to pay a small fee each time we felt like dabbling in the past, rather than clogging up every spare space in our house with old games we never touch. Do not complain. You can no more own a video game than you can own your own flesh and blood anyway. All we ever have is a lease on life. That's what gives it meaning.

Time is short, and life is for living. Not for wandering graveyards. Leave that to The Ghost of Christmas Future. And the goths. Frankly, anyone who's miserable just by being alive deserves to suffer.

Angry Sackboy is deep, man.

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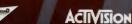


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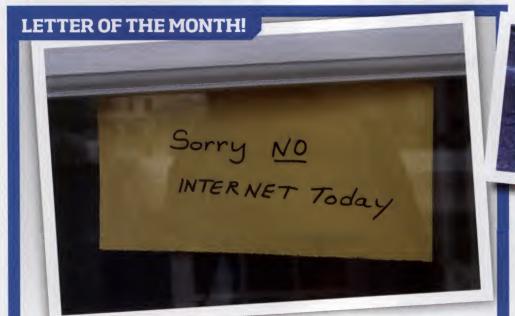


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ROX

Speak to us!



GOING SOLO

'day dudes and dudettes, the mag's a damn good laugh which really does matter, no matter what the other magazines think.

The main issue I'd like to raise is one that probably isn't an issue for most folks, but is very, very sad for people like myself. I live in a small town in rural Western Australia. The sort of small town that has a pub and an IGA and virtually nothing else.

We manage a trip to the city once or twice a year, during which time I can pick up a game or two. Because of these limitations, I need to get games that are both ace and re-playable. Back in the PS2 days, all re-playable meant to me was an "Instant Battle" or "Free Play" mode, you know, bots and stuff. Now that online play has become so mainstream, these features have practically disappeared leaving people without their own internet connection a game which is a few hours long and only good for a few completions and for people like me, that really isn't worth the

Now, I understand that for game developers and publishers to exist, they need to make a profit and to make profit they need to please the bigger group of consumers. It just seems that with all this profit chasing, game companies have completely forgotten the rest of us, leaving us with too few games that satisfy our needs as gamers. (Even Fallout 3 and Oblivion get old, but at least we can go back to them and have a new experience once we're done with Modern Warfare 2 and Dead Space).

The other issue I'd like to briefly discuss is "That Level" from Modern Warfare 2. It was powerful, all right, but to be honest I still don't quite understand all the controversy over it. How is it different from slicing up people in Prototype or blowing up Megaton in Fallout 3 or a typical five minutes in Liberty City? 'No Russian' introduces you to a bad, bad guy in a way that kind of makes hunting him down throughout the rest of the game feel almost like a personal goal and not simply an objective to

cross off. What other game has ever made you feel that way?

But anyway, keep it up guys, it's the only way to stay on top. Cheers.

Neil Pynenburg, via email

Thanks for the words of praise Neil. Sucks that you're stuck in the middle of a gaming desert, but that broadly describes Australia anyway compared to many First World countries, themselves a bigger group of consumers. We're all for local multiplayer and an expansive single player game, and some of the biggest and best games have been primarily singleplayer games: Uncharted and its sublime sequel. GTAIV. BioShock, Heavy Rain, The Saboteur. All of them offer loads of replayability and could occupy you for months. You're not the only person to comment on 'No Russian' so we'll save our comment 'til then. Have a game. A good one with plenty of choices that'll make you go back again and again to squeeze out every last story combination.

LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS...

BIOSHOCK 2

The letter of the month this issue will receive a copy of BioShock 2 for their troubles – enjoy!

HACK ATTACK

was recently playing Borderlands online and noticed an increased

number of people that have obviously hacked the game. Level 70s running around, people firing 90 rockets at once causing the game to crash and people challenging you to a duel just so they can beat you with one bullet. Well done guys, you've proven to some 18-year-old living probably halfway around the world that you can download a program and change your save file. But it's not the players I blame for this, my blame rests with Gearbox. Someone that goes by the name of Mad Moxxi. People are always going to try to hack into games, it can add some fun to the gameplay. However with the sheer impossibility of Mad Moxxi's DLC people are almost forced into hacking. The only way I was able to make it through 100 waves was with four other players online who (except for me) had hacked guns. Sure it's not how the game was supposed to be played but at least this way the temptation to smash the TV is resisted. Gearbox said that they wanted to make it challenging, so why make it impossible for people that aren't ridiculously good at playing shooters. Add a difficulty setting, put in save points every 5 rounds, make the DLC doable for the average player, then and maybe then people wouldn't have to resort to hacking just to make it feel like they haven't been screwed out of their money.

Bradley Griffith, via email

Your blame doesn't rest with the players who cheat? It should TOTALLY rest with the cheaters. We can empathise that Mad Moxxi's hard and will make you mad with its challenge – we made up four new swear words playing it to bring you the review on p79 – but cheating just makes us insane. You're never 'forced' into cheating, you should just be forced into being better at the game. Or learning to curse in very creative ways.

NO RUSSIAN? NO PROBLEM

was just writing to say that I don't think that Modern Warfare 2 should be getting the bad rap over the 'No Russian" Mission. I don't think its fair that an equally awesome and violent game such as GTAIV lets have you killing innocents and not get abused. They are both amazing games and neither of them deserve any slander. To tell you the truth I didn't mind the mission. and didn't find it over the top or offensive in any way. Much like I didn't mind mowing down groups of Liberty city pedestrians.

James Garland, via email

It all comes down to choice, we think. The 'No Russian' level has us divided, not on whether it's controversial, but whether it's a well-made mechanic - but we digress. The controversy is a bit over the top (bannings? Puhlease), but what separates it from games such as GTA, Prototype and Fallout 3 that you and Ché Patterson listed is what you're able to do and what you must do. At some point during 'No Russion' you have to pull the trigger. In GTA you can choose whether to clip civilians who have no impact on your actions.





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ALEX OSTLE

Coin McRae: DiRT 2
"I tried the demo and liked it. Solid gameplay and overall presentation It's also very rewarding - there are heaps of trophies. I still haven't finished it though!"



MATT BLOOR

"I loved Bomberman and it w



MARK N JULIE BLACKMAN

The Saboteur
"It's the final game from Pandemic and the concept of the colour change from black/grey to full colour was intriguing. Fact it's quite a decent game was a bonus!"



IAMES ROSSITER

Dragon Age: Origins
"For the characters have the ability to have sex with underwear on. That night there takes skill. Oh and the gameplay of course... always the gameplay."

CAPTION THIS!

Take one screenshot and release in to the Facebook mob. Many good entries as usual, but the winner this month came from Matthew Falzon. Well done Matthew!



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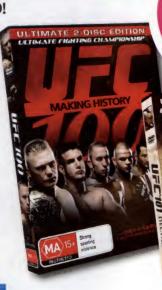
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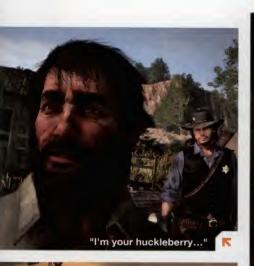












"Uh, sheriff, please aim... higher" The key thing we took away is that there's simply a massive amount of detail

The young girl was on the floor, and a mangy man was hovering above her. As he started to speak we shot him between the eyes. Apparently if we had waited until he finished he would've shot her in front of us.

The last mission was different altogether and saw Marston, with the aid of a drunkard Irishman, gunning his way down a heavily guarded mine to steal a Gatling gun. Shooting the oil lanterns above the head of enemies proved useful here, as did the double-barrelled shotgun. When we reached the gun we had to push it out in a mine cart. When we hit a decline, Marston clung from the back as it sped along the tracks, firing one-handed at any attackers

The key thing we took away is that there's simply a massive amount of detail here. Flies buzz constantly around the faces of the people we speak to. Vultures circle corpses after shootouts. The plains at night are just breathtaking - with no pollution whatsoever the sky is blanketed with stars. Sunrise and sunset ain't half-bad either. The way tents and loose clothing flaps in the breeze - RAGE has cloth physics now. The dialogue, as you'd expect, is delivered without fault, and the sounds effects are bang on. Boots on boards, the crack of gunfire in open-space - nothing has been missed.

The amount of odd jobs and activities on offer is only slightly short of staggering. Bounty hunts, shooting and skinning game, tasks for local tradies... the list goes on. There's night watch, where you and a town's guard dog will watch over a town from dusk 'til dawn. There's poker in the saloons. There's so much, and that's not even counting the random stuff you'll come across out in the countryside.

"Don't move. There's a spider on your back. I'll get him"

"Them's fightin' words, peckerwood"

Red Dead Redemption has been in the news over the past month or so, but unfortunately it's for all the wrong reasons (see 'This Is Your Wife'). If there is truth to the allegations, then that's simply not good enough on Rockstar's part. Having a negative effect on employee's family relationships to save a buck just cannot be condoned. We will say, however, that after our short hands-on we're struggling to see too many faults here. Even if development has been as chequered as it's being alleged, Rockstar San Diego seems to have prevented this from harming the project itself. Red Dead Redemption is perhaps our most eagerly anticipated release of 2010, and we think it'll remain that way.

If you can imagine the game GUN wanted to be, you can imagine Red Dead Redemption. Gritty, action-packed and bloody as hell, if Clint Eastwood had a PS3 this is what he'd put in it.

Fill your hands. & Luke Reilly

THEY SAY

WE SAY

A massive open-world - simultanestuffed with activities and life. Oh, and



THIS IS YOUR WIFE

In an open letter, a group of Rockstar San Diego employee's wives have joined to protest against working conditions Rockstar San Diego. They allege the studio has been in a perpetual state of "crunch" since March of 2009, work hours are now nearly 12 hours a day, six days a week. Makin' games is tough.







GENRE: ADVENTURE | EXPECTED RELEASE: MARCH | DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS. | DEVELOPER: TRAVELLER'S TALES | PLAYERS: 1-2

LEGO HARRY POTTER

It's a kind of magic

games have always been entertaining and well made, rewarding fans of the source material but still being playable and highly entertaining for the cultural dolts who aren't. Harry Potter looks to continue this trend. The subtitle of the game is Years 1 - 4, so expect to see Harry's progression from orphan to Hogwarts student, as well as shakily flying broomsticks, learning spells and visiting the ginger kid's house. It's more than just lip service though, as while the fun inherent in Traveller's Tales' titles remains. the plot of the game is faithful to the books. The focus is less on fighting and shooting, and more on puzzle solving (though there's still a good amount of smashing stuff). One of the earliest stages sees Harry with Hagrid in Diagon Alley, getting his first wand. Along the way, both Hagrid and Harry have to

make a potion by collecting items to toss

in to a cauldron. Teamwork (or just good

as Hagrid has to make a platform for Harry

coordination if you're playing solo) is necessary,

he LEGO themed adventure

to jump on and collect the ingredients. Both characters are playable either in single player or co-op, much like prior LEGO games, with more than 100 different characters available for you to take control of.

We can't really overstate how charming this looks. Mixing detailed, semi-realistic background mixed with painfully cute LEGO characters that have an astounding amount of expression on their digital plastic faces is a sound way to go. Telltale is spruking this as one of the best looking LEGO games, and we have to agree at this early stage.

Harry's school, Hogwarts, acts as a hub area of sorts, a place that not only links together the different stages or 'years' of his education, but also as a place for you to learn spells in class that are integral to your progression. The area itself is a labyrinth, that encourages exploration to collect every last LEGO stud available, and also to appreciate the crafting that's gone into making the school.

As fans of the movie will know, there's a lot that happens in the background at the school, as paintings on the wall come alive, which the game recreates while putting its own spin on the mythos of Harry Potter. Tramping through Hogwarts will be more than just a means to an

end, as the environment looks like it will offer lots of incidental goings-on.

We're looking forward to going back to school.

Paul Taylor

THEY SAY

"An interactive journey that takes players through the most detailed and expansive LEGO environments yet"

WE SAY

It threatens to turn the harshest Potter fan into a wand-carrying wizard. It looks lush, and we can vouch for the humorous antics.





PS3 GENRE: ACTION | EXPECTED RELEASE: TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: AIE | DEVELOPER: A2M | PLAYERS: 1-4

NAUGHTY BEAR

If you go down to the woods today, take a shotgun

acts of violence, because

and playing as a warped character can be a cuckoo's nest full of fun. It's not enough to be mad though; even the most insane lunatic needs a human element. Enter the most innocent of childhood toys. the teddy bear, in quite an recognisable situation. Our titular character. Naughty Bear, sulks about after not being invited to another birthday party. He also likes to play with knives in his bedroom. Deciding with the help of the narrator to deliver a present anyway in the hope of making friends, Naughty is laughed at by other bears on the island of Paradise. He's fairly adept with melee and ranged weapons, so decides on payback. An open-world game, it's more than just running around committing random

here are plenty we all know how well State Of Emergency of psychos in turned out. It reminds us more of Batman: videogames, Arkham Asylum and Manhunt more than GTA though, as you'll be engaged in psychological and physical warfare, aiming to scare the other bears and be as creative as possible in doing so in order to achieve your goal. Deviance is a must to gain scare your opponents and earning Naughty Points, which give you a scale of just how well you're doing. Single-player will span 30-odd levels, with

a range of weaponry to do dirty deeds. We don't have a solid number on the amount of weapons at this stage, but environmental objects play a part in your subversion.

Sure, you could just taunt a foe with a baseball ball, but creep up on him before hand will net you more points. Or you can trash his lunch, or smash another bear to bits in plain sight to make things even more intimidating. For the ultimate in sadism, you can torture a victim so much that he commits suicide. We are in no way joking about this. Being as creative (and utterly mental) as possible nets a high score to compare your antics online.

Online play extends to four players who will work together in teams. Multiplayer modes include capture the flag, king of the hill and search and find, plus in-game bears can be corralled into helping you out. They may, though, end up sabotaging your efforts, so we're looking forward to seeing how that

You'll also be able to dress your growler as a cop, ninja and robot, amongst other things. Some costumes will be needed to fight higher level enemies as you progress so it's plausible that your costume choice will affect your ability to scare others, and thus your rank.

We can't wait to go on a killing spree in this teddy bear's picnic. 4 Paul Taylor

THEY SAY

WE SAY

Naughty? More like evil. Has the paradox of a cute exterior with rotten guts punted by games such as Conker's Bad Fur Day, but given more cohesion.



ENCOMING

BlazBlue









PS3 GENRE: FIGHTING | EXPECTED RELEASE: MARCH 18 | DISTRIBUTOR: AIE | DEVELOPER: ARC SYSTEMS WORKS | PLAYERS: 1-2

BLAZBLUE

It may cure your fighting blue balz



STICK

The Australian version of BlazBlue also comes with a mini arcade stick for free in the first few thousand copies of the game that go on sale. The base of the stick is a touch smaller than half the size of this page and it feels pretty solid. Since it plugs in via USB, it works on other games as well. It's definitely something that will sway pre-orders before the game drops in March.

t time of writing, BlazBlue hadn't been classified by the OFLC. That's not to say it's in any danger of being refused due to, say, dismemberment of space marines, but it'll be interesting to see just what the OFLC say is in this game. We reckon it'll have mature themes, violence, and lashings of boobs. One of the characters is even referred to in-game as – and we're not making this up – 'boobie lady'.

It's more than just gratuitous chest action. BlazBlue is one of the prettiest fighting games you'll ever see. No surprise, really, as it's made by the same mob who crafted Guilty Gear, a fighter with a strong cult following. Backgrounds are 3D, brimming with detail and animation, while the fighters themselves are 2D sprites. Watching them scrap is like watching a lush anime in action, their animations filled with frames to make the fighting smooth.

One stage that stood out was the cemetery, where we fought on a bed of roses. Pumpkins on poles lined the fence, and a spooky house in the background loomed ominously. It was stunning to be a part of, while the action on screen was a dazzling light show.

Even the intro to the story is produced to anime standards. Full voice-acting makes

cutscenes more than just a hinderance to the next showdown, though the plot's fairly indepth so you'll probably spend more time watching than playing. Each of the 12 fighters are folded in to the plot and meet up, with the option to play another story stream as you progress.

The characters themselves are fairly diverse, most of them using a weapon as part of their arsenal, whether it's a melee or ranged implement. Although it's lacking the numbers of SFIV and Tekken, the fighters in BlazBlue are diverse. Boobie lady (a.k.a Litchi) has a massive staff that she flicks around and can even balance on, while another guy, Bang Shishigami, throws out darts and a parasol that rains shurikens.

The combat system is kept fairly basic, utilising a light, medium and heavy and 'Drive' attack, as well as the usual super attacks called 'distortion drives'. After that, it's mostly quarter circles and dragon punch with one or more of the attack buttons mapped to it for specials. Toss in double jumps, dash and air dashes, and you have manoeuvres that lend themselves to making a fast and visually frenetic game.

Although we managed a few three-hot combos, the most comprehensive attacks were linking together special attacks in a brutal trio. Getting there is a test of your quarter circle precision, though your special attacks can be mapped to your shoulder buttons for easy access. Whether this is cheating or not depends on how well you can smash these out. Paul Taylor

THEY SAY

"BlazBlue has been hailed as the game that every self-respecting console fighting fan should play"

WE SAY

It's coming out before Super Street Fighter IV, but it's different enough to still make it onto gamers' shelves when the updated title launches, thanks to radical art design.



BATTLEFIELD BAD COMPANY 2

Prepare to go to war and smash it to bits.

ad Company 2 is a game of variety. As you fight across snowy mountain tops, dense jungles and dusty villages, you'll get your hands on an army-load of vehicles that take to the skies, sea and land as the 'B' team hunt a weapon in South America. Expect to go loco in a Black Hawk helicopter, patrol boats and imposing T-90 tanks.

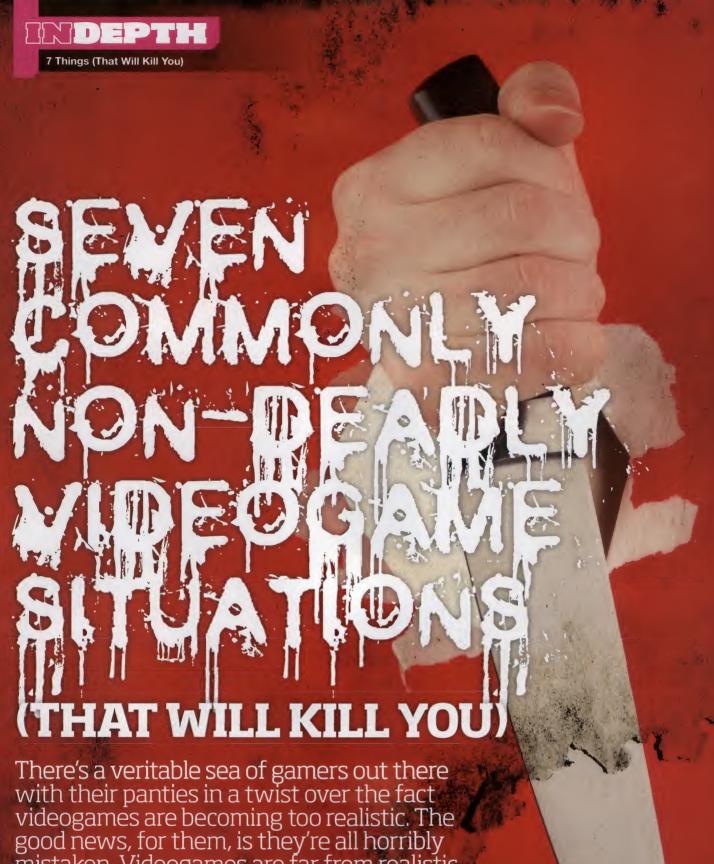
What sets Bad Company 2 apart from other shooters is that the environment comes apart dynamically, and the level of destruction possible has increased since the first game. Can't find a doorway to get through a building? Make one. Drive through, perforate your way inside or just blow it up entirely using the 46 weapons at your disposal and watch the walls come tumbling down. Customise your weaponry to make it your own, to represent your playing style, or just for the bling-factor.

As well as having a campaign packed with irreverent humour, multiplayer will be well supported with more customisable weapons and dedicated servers to make the action nice and fast. Whether you're in it for the story or the hectic online action, Bad Company 2 promises to tear a the shooter scene a new hole.

www.battlefield.com







There's a veritable sea of gamers out there with their panties in a twist over the fact videogames are becoming too realistic. The good news, for them, is they're all horribly mistaken. Videogames are far from realistic. In fact, if you were to apply videogame logic to any number of real life-threatening situations you would almost certainly be compost. Here are seven trivial videogame events that would most probably kill you. To death.



expendable areas of the human body - the ones that aren't really affected by bullets. You know, the shoulder, or the thigh and stuff. Everyone knows grimacing and sucking in some air is more than sufficient to negate the effects of a bullet lodged inside one of these areas. Anyone who says otherwise is a little girl.

THE PROBLEM:

Unfortunately, particularly for those who aren't done killing or are still some time away from derailing an especially cunning terrorist plot, elaborate heist or historically inaccurate Nazi counterattack, being shot is kind of a big deal. You can't really write a bullet off as just a scratch simply because it didn't hit you in the head or a crucial part of your torso.

As a rule, all gunshot wounds are considered medical

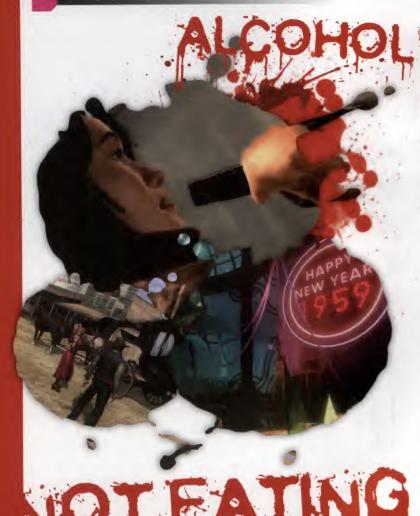
immediate hospital treatment. There aren't really many empty places inside the human body will severely disrupt something from your lungs, and these are required for breathing. Even if vascular damage, ongoing pain and partial to complete loss of mobility. The thigh is no better. circulatory system has a lot of weekend. Without treatment, death by exsanguination could follow. Exsanguination is more commonly known as 'bleeding out'. It should be avoided.

Treatment, it should be noted, should be done by trained professional in a surgical environment. Digging a bullet out of your arm with a combat knife looks manly, but it's absolutely not recommended. Bullets are not toxic, so unless they've been manhandled by a Poison Dart Frog you're not going to suddenly keel over. In fact, the intense heat generated in a bullet by firing it renders it pretty sterile - far more sterile than that knife you've been using to gut zebras.

Painkillers aren't going to help either. If they did you could do away with emergency wards altogether, and just have one guy in a coat doling out Panadol from

DEPTH

7 Things (That Will Kill You)



WFT. GUN. BioShock

IN VIDEOGAMES:

The booze buff is not common in videogames, but it's certainly out there. In WET, taking a large swig from a bottle of whiskey fully restores Rubi's health. In the open-world Western GUN, titular cowpoke Colton White chugs litres of whiskey to negate the effects of bullets lodged in his flesh. In BioShock, you can drink any grog you find lying around to restore health. Actually, in BioShock alcohol increases health but lowers EVE. However, cigarettes increase EVE and lower health - and because they give you more than they take away, doing both in equal amounts is good for you.

But we digress.

The key thing to note is that videogames make drinking good for you, and you can never drink too much of it.

THE PROBLEM:

Yes, you can.

One 700ml of whiskey is probably just shy of 24 standard drinks. Let's say you're no more than an average weight bloke - around 85 kilograms, or less. 12 drinks in one hour will render

you absolutely trolleyed. speech will be heavily slurred your motor skills will be positively rooted and that Double Bacon Cheeseburger you inhaled earlier will now be an embarrassing puree on your shirt. Your blood alcohol concentration at this stage will be about 250mg/dL. That's milligrams per decilitre. Double it to 24 standard drinks in one hour and you're looking at 500mg/dL - or 0.50 per cent concentration. That's 10 times the legal driving limit in Australia. The last thing you'd remember after waking up in a cell in no pants would be the fuzz burning your driver's license and cubing your car. That is, if you weren't dead

You see, the lethal dose of alcohol - what's considered to likely kill 50 per cent of those affected (LD50) - is 400mg/ dL (about 0.40 per cent concentration). If you quaffed a few hip flasks worth of whiskey in the space of a short horse ride, like GUN's Colton White, you'd be lucky to survive. One minute you'd be draped over a karaoke machine singing 'US Forces' and texting that cute co-worker you've got a massive crush on, and the next you'd be deader than 4AM.

AS SEEN IN: Most videogames ever made, except GTA: San Andreas. Kind of.

IN VIDEOGAMES:

How many videogames actually require you to eat? Not that many. Sure, there are countless games that use food as health - but if your health is maxed-out you don't need to eat it. You can suck down roadside hot dogs and Cluckin' Bell all day in GTAIV if you wanted - but what if you don't? What if you decide to go a whole week without a scrap of tucker? Nothing. Niko remains the same mediumbuilt male he was seven days ago - he doesn't become some emaciated skeleton.

We've never seen Soap or Price take a time-out for chow. As far as we know they're busy saving the world on empty stomachs. We've been playing The Saboteur recently - Sean Devlin subsists entirely on cigarettes. Not a sandwich to be seen.

Nobody's eating anything really. At all.

Food. Who needs it?

THE PROBLEM: Who needs food? Everyone.

You don't eat when you're injured. You eat when you're hungry. If you don't, eventually you'll cark it.

Persons experiencing starvation will lose significant fat and muscle mass as the body breaks down these tissues for energy. This is called catabolysis; it's the process of a body breaking down parts of itself in order to keep more vital systems like the nervous system and heart functioning. Like when you're sitting on the lounge and take the batteries out of one less-crucial remote to keep another going. Only far more awful.

The stomach will waste away and weaken the perception of hunger, since that perception is controlled by the percentage of your belly that is empty. You'll also become dehydrated. That's had too.

Vitamin deficiency will result, leading to a vast array of issues that range from socially awkward (diarrhoea) to exceedingly problematic (death).







IN VIDEOGAMES:

Being set ablaze in videogames is generally a bit of a pain In the arse, because you invariably know when the flames die out you're going to be left with a sliver of health. At this stage you're going to need to hide behind a box for a few seconds while you recover, or grab a hot dog.

Other than that, fire is little more than a moderate inconvenience.

THE PROBLEM:

Burns to over 15 per cent of the body for adults are potentially

life-threatening injuries (because of the risk of hypovolaemic shock) and should have formal fluid resuscitation and monitoring in a burns unit. Being sprayed by a flamethrower in a busy intersection and having your whole body on fire will likely result in burns to a large percentage of your body. Even If this doesn't kill you (which it will) you're not going to carjacking your way out of the area

Also, if and when you're on fire – it's not just going to stop if you're patient enough and wait it out long enough. Stop, drop

AS SEEN IN:

Gran Turismo, GTA, anything with cars in it.

IN VIDEOGAMES:

Cars and videogames: it's one of this industry's most enduring matches. We've been racing them, crashing them and using them to get around in videogames for decades. The digital world of autos, however, Is an extremely safe one. Highspeed collisions rarely leave your car completely undrivable, and they almost never result in death.

THE PROBLEM:

High-speed car accidents are extraordinarily good at killing people. Even if you're not

impaled by a chunk of flying debris (or your knees being driven into your own chest, the sheer amount of force and energy involved in bringing a 1500 or so kilogram lump of metal and bucket seats from 100km/h+ (for instance) to zero in the space of 0.2 seconds (for instance) is more than capable of killing a person.

Bailing out, or being ejected, is no help either. Estimates indicate that more than 75 per cent of people who are ejected from cars during crashes die in the process. Think about that next time Niko is blasted, screaming, through a windscreen only to dust himself off and grap a bot dog.



AS SEEN IN:

Just Cause, GTA: San Andreas and, um, Just Cause 2 (probably).

IN VIDEOGAMES:

Leaping out of planes is nothing. Rico Rodriguez from Just Cause does it constantly. Hell, he spends most of his time in the air hitching a ride simply by grabbing a plane and holding on. He does this in nothing but tight jeans and a loose shirt because it's no big deal, What sort of hancy can't handle a little wind?

THE PROBLEM:

Define a little wind. The windblast from jumping from a plane close to or above speed of sound is immense. So immense it'll most probably kill you (especially if, instead of a flight suit you're sporting nothing

but some casual clobber and lightly-tussled hair). Take Brian Udell, for instance - the only man ever to survive ejecting at sea level from a jet going faster than Mach 1, This would have resulted in a load of 45 g - which would be like being temporarily crushed by a minibus, or about 40 Kirstie Alleys. His gloves and watch were torn away, his helmet and mask were RIPPED OFF HIS HEAD, and every blood vessel in his face exploded. Oh, and the force of wind also broke both his legs at the calves (blasting them beneath his seat) and dislocated both his arms (one relocated before he hit the ocean). He pulled himself into his life raft wearing a shredded life-vest and only one out of four limbs working.

Can you see the problem



BLAZ OF GLORY

Thanks to All Interactive Entertainment we've got 10 signed copies of *BlazBlue* to giveaway. Each features to nifty little arcade stick that'll be available with the game in stores. For a chance to win, simply answer the following question and follow the entry instructions on page 26!

Question: If you could create a BlazBlue character, who would they be and what would they look like?



OPS CHATS TO ARC SYSTEM WORKS' CARLO CHERICONI, PRODUCER OF BLAZBLUE

OPS: BlazBlue, and the previous Guilty Gear series, are obviously made with a great deal of passion. When did you start to play fighting games and which one influenced your work?

CC: I used to be a regular at game centres playing arcade games. I was a student back then, mainly playing all available 2D fighting games you ever heard before like *Street Fighter*, *Vampire* and *King of Fighters*. If I had to choose one then I would say I was most addicted to *Vampire* (it's called *Night Warriors: Darkstalkers' Revenge* outside Japan).

That game gave me a big impact of its graphics and game system. I was always playing the game thinking, 'This should be like this... and that should be...' to make it my own in my mind.

BlazBlue isn't just another fighting game. I wanted to create an 'entertainment' so I've watched a large number of Hollywood action movies for research as well. My ultimate goal was always to let people have fun.

OPS: 2D HD looks great. Why don't other developers use it more?

CC: Creating HD 2D animation graphics take a huge amount of time and effort. Creators' passion must reflect on the final results big time. All of us a Arc System Works staff love anime and our passion is to create something superior than anime. I don't think there is nobody like us in other game developers with this kind of passion. Let's just say Arc System Works just happens to have many people with the same passion.

OPS: Street Fighter IV showed that 3D graphics could keep the same charm as 2D. Have you ever considered dropping sprite animation in favour of 3D?

CC: To be honest, the answer is yes. I think Street Fighter IV and Okami are great games and there are so many other great games with 3D anime-style graphics. They are all well made but my ideal creations of '2D animation' are not there, we prefer expressive and passionate styles of drawing. We have actually used a lot of 3D models in BlazBlue game creation process. The base of character animations in the game are all in 3D. We have then added hand drawn 2D graphics on top to create sprite animations. We might start using 3D when the technology becomes available for us to create the same expressive drawing style.

OPS: Which character from other fighting game would you like to enroll in the cast of *BlazBlue*?

CC: This is a very difficult question to answer. If it's okay then I would choose SOL=BADGUY from our very own *Guilty Gear* series, Donovan & Huitzil from *Vampire*, Akuma from *Street Fighter*, and Bayonetta if I'm allowed to pick one from action game.

BlazBlue will be available in stores March 18.



Top 50 Characters

MOST TOP MEMORABLE VIDEOGAME CHARACTERS

The virtual world, much like the regular world, is a stage and each of us play a part. But whereas the regular world is firmly based in stinky, unalterable reality, the virtual one is based in pure awesomeness. In a general sense, it means we can all escape our own predetermined 'parts' in our own existence -especially the shitty scenes that consist of us/ going to school like a shlub, flipping burgers like a boob, and generally not saving the world. While in the process of avoiding loved ones/ idiots/society in general, the virtual world has let us slip into the shoes of some truly memorable characters over the years. Here, for your edification, is a collection of our favourite alter egos.

DEPTH







DEPTH

Top 50 Characters

PYRAMID HEAD

AS SEEN IN:

SILENT HILL SERIES

Hey, who's up for some graphic mannequin rape?! what we thought. When Pyramid Head made his .. uh, "entrance" in Silent Hill 2 it shocked the bejeebus out of us. Which is exactly what was meant to happen. Which is why he's here, and why we're still afraid of him.



RYU HAYABUSA

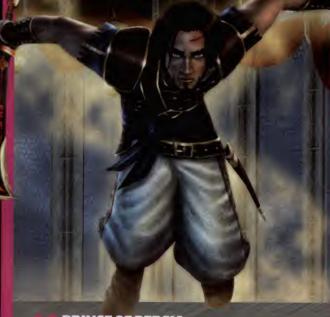
AS SEEN IN: NINJA GAIDEN SERIES, DEAD OR ALIVE SERIES

One of garning's greatest warriors, Hayabusa has decimated more demons than you've had bowls of cereal. The man speaks little, and makes Persian princes look like pansies when relying on time-altering daggers. Though he slices through chumps at a lightning rate, Ryu does it with more cool than an Antarctic ice shelf.

AGRO AS SEEN IN: SHADOW OF THE

COLOSSUS

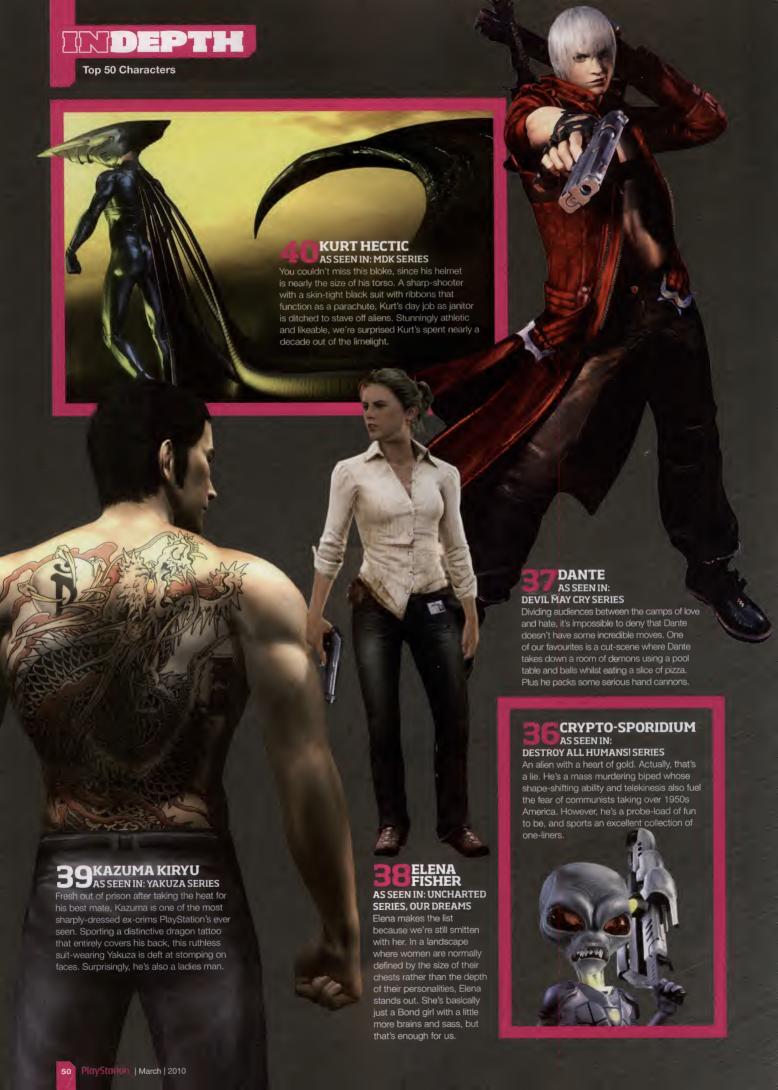
A French motorcycle-riding cop who gets transported to yeudal Japan to find a batshit crazy army, Jacques' story is badass, Oh, and he's also played by Jean Reno. The same Jean Reno in *The Professional, Ronin and even Godzilla.* He's also the only Frenchman who cleft a demon in two, and then set it on fire.



PRINCE OF PERSIA

AS SEEN IN: PRINCE OF PERSIA SERIES

Now here's a character that has seen more reinventions than Madonna.
While his name is never explicitly stated, and his personality and appearance have varied over time, the Prince is never without his trademark. athletic and acrobatic skills. Whatever incarnation you may think is the best, there's little doubt that The Prince's parkour antics had a major hand in the





Top 50 Characters

ABE AS SEEN IN: ABE'S ODDYSEE, ABE'S EXODDUS

An anorexic weakling in a loin cloth. Such an unlikely hero, such a loveable scamp. Abe (en)chanted his way into our hearts with his possessive approach to combat, his quirky Gamespeak, and the way he could melodiously fart on command (all the time, every time). That, in itself, earns recognition.

32THE BOSS AS SEEN IN:

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Want to know why she is known as 'the mum of U.S. Special Forces'? Well, in June 1944, during World War II, The Boss led her Cobra unit to victory at the Battle of Normandy. She was pregnant at the time and even gave birth to a baby boy on the battlefield (via a messy caesarian section). Legendary status: confirmed. Enough said.

33 TOMMY VERCETTI

Before Niko, there was Tommy and the neon nuthouse that was the '80s. Sporting a past that would make Mr. Blonde from Reservoir Dogs look like a girl scout, Tommy Vercetti is let loose on Vice City and ends up ruling it like Tony Mohtana. He also kills more people in the storyline than any other GTA character on record. Impressive.

SIEGFRIED SCHTAUFFEN

AS SEEN IN: SOUL BLADE, SOULCALIBUR SERIES

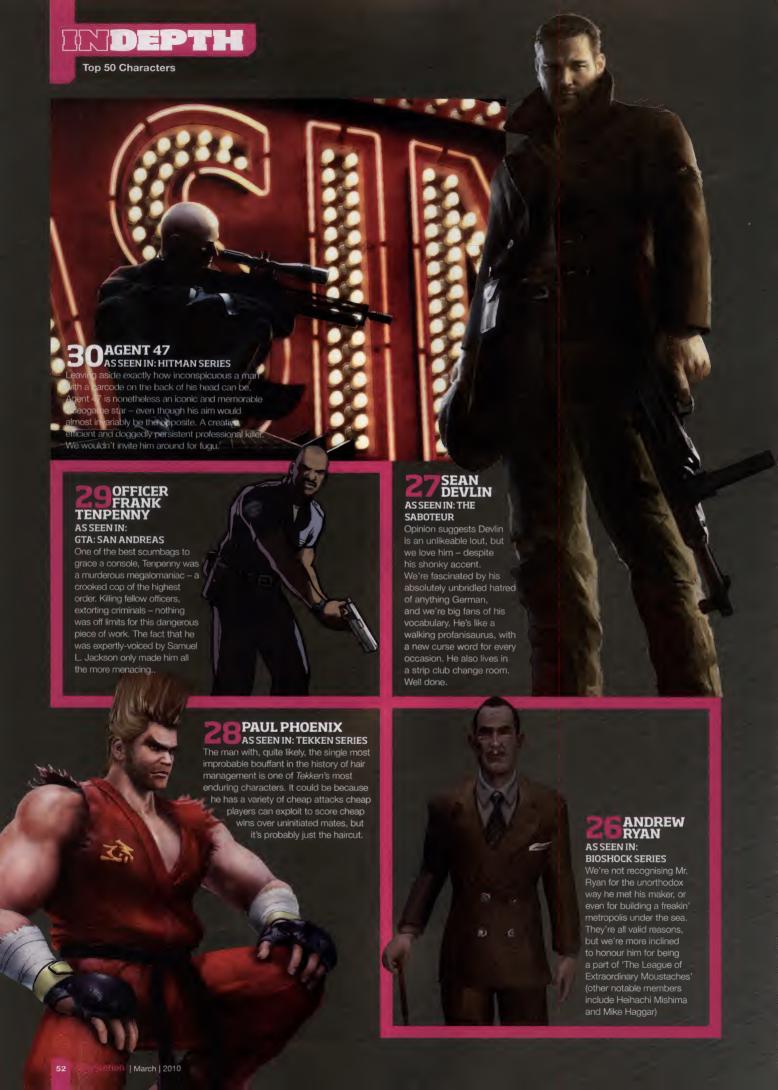
boy; but trust us, Siggy has been through some shit since Soul Blade. Accidentally beheading his own dad led him to become Nightmare, though he did eventually manage to escape Soul Edge's thrail. Come Soulcalibur IV, Siegfried is proof that any person may redeem themselves (given / enough sequels).

CRASH BANDICOOT

AS SEEN IN: CRASH BANDICOOT

SERIES, CRASH TEAM RACING

Now here's a cautionary tale. For a while there Crash was the poster marsupial of the mighty PlayStation empire. Then Naughty Dog dumped his arse, and he had to pimp himself out to any platform that would have him. We definitely like your old stuff better than your new stuff, Crash.



INDEPTH

Top 50 Characters



53

DEPTH

Top 50 Characters

20JADE AS SEEN IN: BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

Jade is the rarest of rare gems; a videogame heroine who is inquisitive, intelligent, brave, and fully-clothed. Interestingly, her creators consciously made her racially ambiguous as well, in an effort to allow players to see themselves in the role. Aside from Half-life 2's lovely Alyx, Jade's blueprint really hasn't been reused.

1 CLAPTRAP (CL4P-TP) AS SEEN IN: BORDERLANDS

The plucky robot that could... hide, be dead, be neurotic. And breakdance. Despite his fear of bandits, bullets affect Clatrap like romcoms affect Rambo (i.e. they don't) - he's one NPC that's always a source of info and hilarity delivered in a permanent chirpy tone. We're waiting for the Claptrap DLC

SEPHIROTH AS SEEN IN: FINAL FANTASY SERIES, KINGDOM HEARTS SERIES, EHRGEIZ

Sephiroth is an utterly misunderstood guy who just wanted to destroy the world by summoning a huge meteor, and to kill your girlfriend with a sword longer than most street signs. Yeah, okay. This guy is about as evil and twisted as a pretzel forged in Hell. He's also one of the best antagonists ever designed.

17RYU AS SEEN IN: STREET FIGHTER SERIES

Some people say Ken. We say Ryu. And when we do say "Ryu" we actually pronounce it correctly, unlike all of our Philistine mates. Ryu is the personification of the perfect pugilist, and it is rumoured that he will only tell his last name to whoever beats him. This is why no one in the universe (including Ken Masters) knows what it is.

16BRUCIE KIBBUTZ AS SEEN IN: GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

Easily the most entertaining character in GTAIV, Brucie, is a juiced-up (and likely bisexual) alpha-male jock and lifestyle entrepreneur. Niko spends quite a bit of their time together passive-aggressively ragging on him, but Brucie — to his credit – takes it in his stride. Too much Chilean bull shark testosterone may have shrunk his brain.

Top 50 Characters





RIGGS

AS SEEN IN: BRÜTAL
LEGEND

Roadles are supposed to fade into the background, but the irrepressible Eddie Riggs (voiced by the even more irrepressible Jack Black) is hard to forget. With an axe in each hand, a backstage pass slung from his neck, a durry dangling between his lips and his enchanted belt buckle perched above his whammy bar, he makes for a memorable metal hero.

DEPTH

Top 50 Characters



Katamari Damacy is messed up at the best of times, but things enter a new level of lunacy whenever this effeminate king opens his mouth. When he isn't spewing rainbows, he's scratch-talking hilarity. Also, you really can't fault a guy who gets drunk enough to accidentally destroy every star in the universe. That's a Friday night to aspire to, right there.

CAPTAIN JOHN PRICE AS SEEN IN: CALL OF DUTY MODERN WARFARE SERIES

Best. Beard. In Gaming. Price is the man. Thanks to his ancestor appearing in a previous *COD* game, you just know for a fact that this modern day Price is a thoroughbred bad-arse. He's death distilled and serves as the perfect mentor – not just for you and your player character, but for *all* men.



He's not an entirely well-defined character— particularly in the rist, usine – but the nature of the series gives Taring. It's mysterious Steve McQueen aura Inst E hard to shake. We're not even sure he hard to shake. Use're not even sure he hard no running to have head installment of the large running of the large was liked because his surface.

80FFICER TANNER
AS SEEN IN: DRIVER SERIES

7DAXTER (AND JAK)

AS SEEN IN: JAK & DAXTER SERIES

Life handed Daxter some lemons by turning him into an ottsel (half otter, half weasel) - Daxter responded by making a cool refreshing drink. Daxter is the hero that most of us are afraid we are. He's just a little too concerned, a little bit afraid, and he would rather take the easy way out. As far as sidekicks go. Daxter is pretty hard to beat.

BAYONETTA AS SEEN IN:

BAYONETTA, EVERY TEENAGE BOY'S WET DREAM

She's more than just a sultry witch with a skin-tight costume and provocative librarian specs. Packing style, from the way she oozes across the screen when walking to acrobatically twisting herself into knots when loosing off a volley of bullets, she's also a confident, intelligent character. This is one witch you'd want to be spellbound by.











It's almost here. It's massive. Say hello to the game that's going to take over your life

two planets up from the Earth and you'll find Jupiter, the largest celestial body out of the eight 'proper planets. Final Fantasy is like Jupiter, It's big, but you just don't realise how big it is until you compare it to the other massive objects close by. Unlike the mighty planet, FFXIII isn't just full of gas. There's mass to go with its volume.

There's no doubt that the game most of the PlayStation faithful associate with the Final Fantasy tag is Final Fantasy VII. Permanently branded onto players psyche, it has sold over 10 million copies since its release in 1997, which makes it the best selling Final Fantasy to date. FFXIII is roughly a tenth of the way to this milestone as in its first week on sale in native Japan late last year the public snapped up 1.3 million copies. It helps that the director of FFVII, Yoshinori Kitase, is the producer of this first true high-definition Final Fantasy. Also, FFVII's event planner, Motomu Toriyama, is the director here.

on working with RPGs - that's a hell of a long time to

well as presenting the blueprint for future RPGs". That experience, along with a team dedicated to squeezing as much as possible out of your console, means this is an expansive experience. Square Enix has had roughly four years, since FFXII on PS2, to craft it. It's not as long as the wait between Gran Turismos, but it's definitely up there. The gaming landscape has changed significantly and from our extensive hands on so has FF. It's a paradox though; simultaneously more streamlined in the battle system and progression, but also demanding patience and observation when upgrading weapons and noting the damage enemies take during battle.

Since last month we've had much more hands on time with the game. We gave up sunlight and sleep to join the protagonists on the socially ruptured planet of Cocoon. We're nowhere near seeing any sign of the final credits.

Final Fantasy XIII

WHO'S WHO

FFXIII weaves together the story of many characters over the course of the game, in both present time and flashback. It's a bit like 24, but without Kiefer Sutherland torturing dudes. Although there are more characters than the six we've detailed below, we'd be spoiling far too much if we revealed them all.

SNOW VILLIERS

Snow is a member of NORA, a group of freedom fighters rebelling against the forces of PSICOM who are expelling people branded as I'Cie (potential monsters) or those that may have been in contact with them from the planet, in what's called the 'Purge'. He intends to rescue his fiancée Serah from of the Pulse fal'Cie (the antagonists) but is transformed himself on his rescue mission.



VANILLE

A permanently perky young woman, Vanille's past is a mystery. Bound for 'relocation' on a Purge train, she follows Hope and his mother onboard, and witnesses the death of the young boy's mother. Escaping with Hope to the Pulse Vestige, she encourages him to say what he must to Snow – and also becomes caught up in the destiny of the five other people she meets there.

LIGHTNING

An ex-solider, Lightning is initially cold towards the group she becomes integrated with. Her only purpose is to rescue her sister, Serah (also Snow's fiancée) from the Pulse fal'Cie. However, her destiny changes when she transforms into a l'Cie herself when trying to free Serah. Still headstrong she becomes part of the group trying to discover their new purpose whilst running for their lives.





SAZHKATZROY

Not much is known about the man with a tiny Chocobo chick that hides in his hair, although he does carry matching hand-cannons that are the only ranged weapons we've seen so far. The first time we see Sazhis as he emerges with Lightning from a train carrying Purge passengers. After Snow and his group free them, Sazh reluctantly follows her into the Pulse Vestige.



Along with his mother, Hope is caught up in the Purge, bound for relocation – or probable extermination. After watching his mother die when she volunteered to fight against PSICOM with Snow's band of rebels, Hope vows revenge against the man he sees as being responsible for her death and follows him to the Pulse Vestige – and inevitable transformation into a l'Cie.





FANG

Voiced by an Australian voice-actress in the western release of the game, Fang is branded with a l'Cie tag that is scorched and twisted. Although she ought to be an enemy of the military, Fang seems to be leading a military unit who capture Snow after his battle with PSICOM and the game's first Eidolon, Sheva. Give her a haircut and a red top, and she could pass as Chloe from Uncharted 2.



INDEPTH

Final Fantasy XIII

THE PLAYER'S VOICE

We threw open the Facebook page at **tinyurl.com/OPSAus** to find out what you think about the PS3's first *Final Fantasy* title.

Josef Barker: Nothing beats Final Fantasy

Michael John Williams: I can't wait for Final Fantasy XIII. Ever since I saw Final Fantasy VIII as a kid, I was converted to a gamer. They just keep getting better solving problems like random battles and the like.

Arch Sta: Looks like it's a lot of fun and I love how you choose if you want to fight or not and instead of random pop ups. That got annoying, some times you just walked five steps and you get attacked. Cant wait until FFXIII is out.

Jason Hickman: One of the things I like about the series is that any FF takes you so long to finish. You always get value for your money, always good gameplay and there are always extras galore and sometimes the extras are better than the storyline.

Robert Hamblet: If those (four) years of development time make an amazing game above other competitors I'm happy with that.

Declan Ladbrooke-Bower: I've finished 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9 and 12. I didn't like 8 or 10 they were too stale for my liking. I don't really mind [how long it takes to finish a *Final Fantasy* title] at all. I am looking forward to the side-quests though.

Chris Cowell: I was very excited when I saw trailers and video footage of the game, but was extremely upset reading reviews of the game that has been released in Japan where pretty much everyone was bagging it out for being too linear and unfinished.

Andrew Maddock: The thing I like with the FF games is even though they're set in completely different worlds you have a common stream of

things that bind them together: I'm talking Gil, Summons, Moogles and of course CHOCOBOS!

> Scott Heyne: I looooove Final Fantasy, pumped for XIII. That's enough for me.

Benno Napier: I love the art style! It's beautiful, sleek, realistic graphics work even for the huge weird disturbing creatures!

Youshaa Ghanem: I have never played Final Fantasy although this one seems to be interesting. I might give this one a go.

Andrew Threlfall: Not looking forward to it at all. The RPG genre for me is with the likes of Oblivion and Fallout 3. Never been a fan of any Final Fantasy game. I know I'm in the minority, but I just don't like the turn based fighting and the heavy Japanese influence.

THE BIGGEST STICK

As well as lobbing magic, your characters also have physical weapons. Although you can find powerful guns and such in chests scattered throughout the world, you can upgrade your existing weapon of choice with items dropped by defeated foes at any save point. Here are five steps to making your arsenal that little bit more deadly.



STEP 1

Pick your weapon. The highlighted face at the top tells you whom the weapon belongs to. You'll want to max out its Exp (Experience).



STEP 2

Pick an item. Each one will give your weapon a certain amount of experience. In this case, three lots of Liquid Crystal Lens will apply 300XP to Lightning's weapons. Just the right amount to max out this level of Exp.



STEP 3

Ding! Level up, and the result in this case is more Strength and Magic.
This process can also be applied to Accessories that alter your resistance to attacks/magic, etc.



STEP 4

If you apply the right amount of items and in a certain combination, you'll also get an experience multiplier bonus, meaning you'll be able to level up faster. How do you know which items and how many? Experimentation.



STEP 5

Got a bunch of superfluous stuff? You can sell it for Gil, or you can dismantle it for more items to upgrade your gear. Some items can only be found by dismantling weapons and accessories.

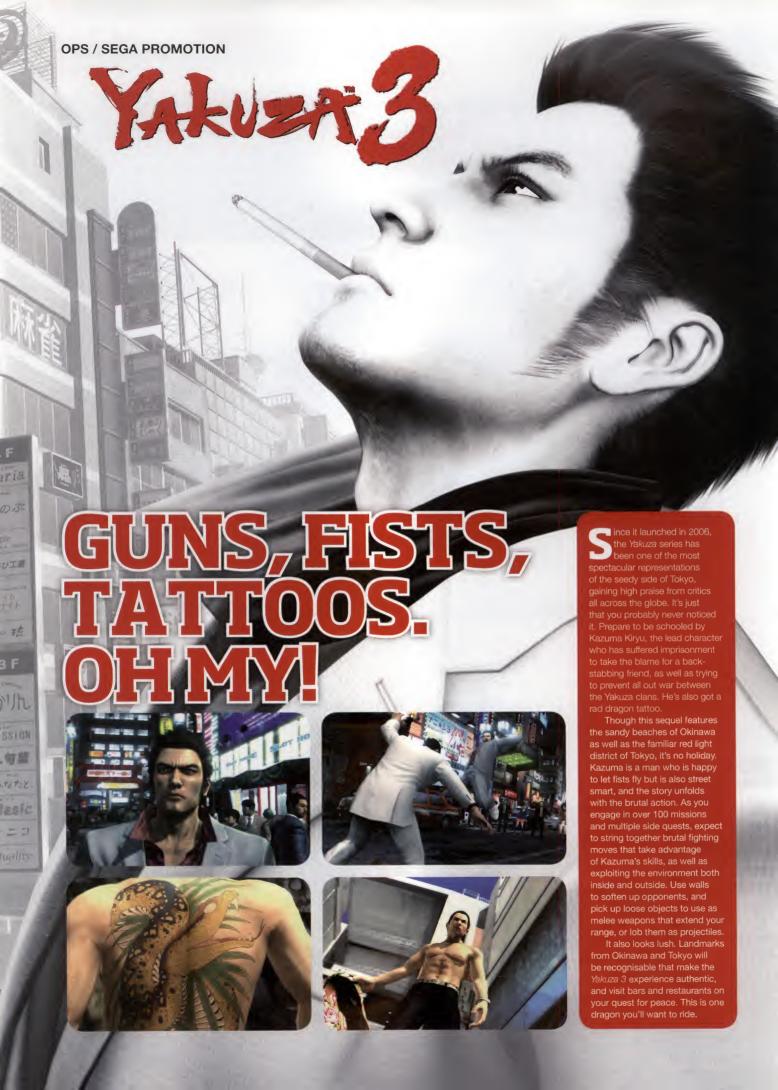
Final Fantasy XIII



FINAL FANTASY XIII: A TIMELINE

60 hours. The game's creators told us it will take that long to finish FFXIII if all you do is follow the storyline. What other games can you finish in that time?





REVIEW

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REVIEW RATING

Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an amazing fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible praise.

Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few minor blemishes from being a 10. Likely one of the very best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise.

PlayStation.
BRONZE
AWARD

PlayStation

GOLD

8 Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a bunch of moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but few will want to play a game that half sucks

Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

Wery disappointing: Things start to go very wrong here – fundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

2 Terrible: Virtually nothing good here at all, and definitely not worth the effort of removing the wrapper.

The worst: Reserved for the very worst gaming could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS MONTH

- 45%
- Drilling people in the face
- 25%
- Executing space marines
- 20%
- Total fistbump destruction
- 10%
- Smiting unbaptised babies

We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs!



The aesthetics and atmosphere have been spliced up to the eyeballs

BIOSHOCK 2



BioShock 2

WORSE THAN

BIOSHOCK



BETTER THAN

REGULAR SHOCK





INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE SHOOTER RELEASE: NOW DISTRIBUTOR: 2K GAMES DEVELOPER: 2K MARIN/2K AUSTRALIA | PLAYERS: 1-10 RRP: \$109.95

BIOSHOCK 2

Causing troubles with Mr. Bubbles

he screwtopian city of Rapture is like a nightmare Kings Cross pub crawl set in the Sydney Aquarium. Booze, ciggies, and fish are plentiful, drugaddled freaks wish to mug you with bits of two-by-four, and the local bouncers only go psychotic if someone tries to get hands-one with the girls.

Rapture may also be likened to a laden with a cargo-hold full of questions dying to be answered. Who were the plasmids tested on? What was it like to fight in the civil war? Who filled the massive power vacuum after Ryan and Fontaine sorted one another out? BioShock 2 seamlessly interweaves its own sordid tale that doesn't just allude to the answers of these questions - it ensnares you with a filthy tentacle and drags you kicking and screaming to the truth.

The game takes place 10 years after the patricidal events of the first game with the

main antagonist taking the form of clinical psychiatrist Sofia Lamb. Lamb was once a political enemy of Andrew Ryan until he had her silenced and locked away (which is why we never heard her ramblings before now). Now that Ryan has gone to that 'big putting green in the sky', Lamb has reappeared and come to power thanks to a new cult philosophy that is the antithesis of Ryan's objectionist beliefs. She is the champion of collectivism which, basically, is the idea of achieving a utopia by unifying all of Rapture into one massive mutated Manson family.

You begin life as a Big Daddy designated 'Delta' - the first of your kind to successfully share a physiological bond with a single Little Sister. Through mysterious events in the game (that we won't spoil here), you're put out of commission for 10 years, before waking up at the start of the timeline of this game. You also find yourself to be unique to all other Big Daddies by still possessing your own free will. Thus begins a hellish journey

of self-discovery that is forwarded by the telepathic advice of your own bonded Little Sister, Eleanor Lamb - daughter of the queen bitch herself. Smells like a fiercely thickening plot, no?

Before you can reach your adoptive daughter you'll have to cut a swath through the local weirdos, and being a combat specialist badass in a diving suit certainly has its upsides. Strapped to your right mitt is the iconic Big Daddy drill which greatly expands the fisticuffs action of the fights. You also gain access to a slew of new weapons previously unavailable in the original; including a .50 cal machine gun that could easily be designated an anti-aircraft weapon, an 'impale-o-licious' spear gun, and one of the sweetest double-barrelled shotguns ever conceived by mankind. As before, each of these weapons may be upgraded with nasty secondary ammo types that can imbue your attacks with additional elemental damage, armour-piercing properties or they can

Sister: 160 ADAM an additional 80 ADAM: priceless. You can also secure ADAM sea slugs when wandering on the ocean floor, or pilfer it off









This man is on FIRE. And from downtown, no less

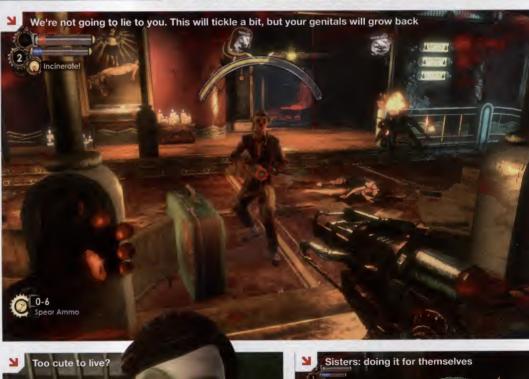
It's moments like this that really reinforce how intelligent a game BioShock 2 is. If you're shrewd enough you'll have a ridiculous amount of strategic options. You'll need every single one of them too, because being a Big Daddy comes with some added responsibilities. As in the first game you can either rescue a Little Sister, or harvest her precious ADAM, once you've eliminated her bodyguard. However, BioShock 2 gives you a third option in the form of gathering additional ADAM from two corpses per Sister. Once you set her down to do the deed, the game quickly becomes an exercise in survival, with all manner of Splicers (including the mammoth new Brute type) out to murder you. These encounters are a stroke of genius that reward sensible planning and they actually manage to make the pissweak defensive plasmids of the first game extremely useful.

extremely useful.

Visually, the level-designs in this sequel are a cut above what we saw in the original.

10 years of time has ravaged both the faces of the junkie Splicers and the city they live in. Most notably, the ocean has started reclaiming Rapture with bioluminescent coral that bathes the chaotic corridors in seductive hues of pink and orange. This visual feast moves onto dessert with improved water tech, 'breathtaking' outside sections, and a better lighting system that will, literally, have you jumping at your own shadow.

The series also gets a shot in the arm in terms of longevity, thanks to a brand new multiplayer mode. Something that immediately sets it apart from the crowd is it has a story attached to it and takes place in a completely different time period to the single-player campaign. Waking up in a classy















ne of the bigger problems the Catholic Church has faced over the years was the problem of children who died before they were baptised – particularly

babies.

WORSE THAN
BILL & TED'S BOGUS JOURNEY



BETTER THAN

DRAG ME TO HELL



You see, according to the Catholic Church (before the 13th Century), ALL unbaptised people, (including newborns) who died would go to Hell. This was because original sin had not been 'cleansed' by

This concept was criticised by Peter Abelard, a French philosopher,

baptism.

who said that sending infants to Hell would be kind of a dick move on God's part and introduced the idea of 'Limbo' – a state of existence where unbaptised babies would be spared Hell, but still be barred from Heaven. The idea became generally accepted. This make-it-up-as-you-go-along attitude is not exactly uncommon when it comes to religion.

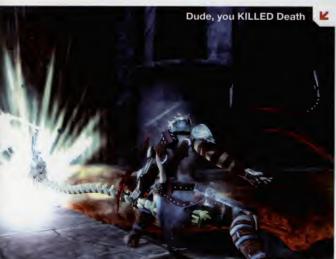
Amazingly – to us, anyhow – it wasn't until 2007 that the Church (kind of) changed its mind. Apparently, there are "reasons to hope" God doesn't send tiny, precious little babies to the outskirts of Hell anymore. Maybe. They're not positive. Note to Pope: you can stop wondering why Church attendance is in a freefall.

We mention this because we had to do some research after, under an hour into Dante's Inferno, we were attacked by a screaming horde of unbaptised babies with swords instead of arms. These babies are in Limbo, the First Circle of Hell in the epic 14th Century poem upon which this game is based. They're crying as they waddle towards you. It could be the freakiest shit ever to befall us in more than two decades of videogaming.

What Visceral Games is doing here is living up to its new name. Playing Dante's Inferno you get the feeling that nobody at Visceral is holding anything back. A few months ago we explored just where exactly the moral compass of the average gamer points. Kill a baby, level up, we joked. Now we actually are.

This isn't loose-wristed criticism though, and we'll stress that we're not offended. We just felt it was worthwhile pointing it out. The developers themselves don't even make a big deal out of it – they're just briefly there, in your face, for a few waves and then they're gone. What it does illustrate, however, is that Dante's Inferno is Hell without compromise. Several centuries ago this is what people





thought of when they pictured Hell. Some wackjobs persist in doing so. All Visceral has done is burn it to a Blu-ray.

Like we've mentioned, Dante's Inferno is loosely based on the first part of Dante Aligheri's Divine Comedy. Players will assume the role of Dante as he fights his way through the nine Circles of Hell to save his beloved Beatrice from Lucifer. The large scythe in his hand belongs to Death, or rather 'belonged to' Death. You'll literally defeat Death not 10 minutes into proceedings. Like we said, this is an unrestrained game. In Dante's Inferno, the first boss is Death and after you kill him things only get worse.

It's the art direction that impresses most, with each Circle boasting a unique identity. You'll fight through all nine. We won't exhaustively detail what to expect lest we spoil anything, but they're as unhinged as you'd expect. It's a great looking game, backed by a powerful score. Full marks for



presentation, and extra credit for imagination.

But it's not without fault. One, we would've preferred Visceral to have chosen a consistent way to present the game's story sequences. As it stands they're a mix of in-engine cut-scenes, pre-rendered FMV and stylishly illustrated full-colour stills.

More importantly, however, the game also could've done a lot more to distinguish itself from the series it takes the bulk of its inspiration from. For a while it's quite distracting just how virtually-identical Dante's Inferno is to the God of War series. We find ourselves in a position where we feel we don't even need to detail how the gameplay itself functions. Combat, collecting orbs souls... it truly is a straight lift. We found ourselves, at least initially, fascinated by trying to anticipate the next gameplay mechanic that'll be copied wholesale from the Sony series rather than simply enjoying what we currently had in front of us.

To be fair, though, being too similar to another great game doesn't make Dante's Inferno a bad one. For fans of hack and slash, and those anxiously awaiting the return of Kratos, you could do a helluva lot worse than this. . Luke Reilly

FINAL SAY:`

PRESENTATION

Horrific creatures, hellish environments - it's like a sick comic book come to life.

SOUND

The wails of the damned provide some of the most unsettling audio ever.

CONTROLS

It's God of War, without Kratos. We can't describe it any more succinctly than that.

REPLAY VALUE

Good for at least two playthroughs - you won't earn every uprgrade in one.

VERDICT: Derivative and simple, but well-produced and very playable. Please, just go to Hell.



REVIEW

Heavy Rain









choice is the primary gameplay mechanic. How you act, when you act and whether or not you do it successfully will define your experience here. The story will unfold depending on how you make it unfold. Heavy Rain is barely a game as you and we would understand it, but that's the point.

Heavy Rain is a murder mystery. You'll get to play as four characters, each on the trail of the elusive Origami Killer: a grief-stricken dad, a private eye, an FBI

profiler and a sassy journalist.

The thing that will strike you is the visuals, and they're basically without fault. The set dressing is spectacular, the attention to detail unparalleled. The characters themselves are just meticulously drawn and animated - full body and facial motion capture, in addition to a host of advanced techniques, have made for some of the best-looking videogame characters available. We haven't seen models this good this side of the kind of gear Naughty Dog regularly creates, well, ever.

If you've read anything we've printed previously about *Heavy Rain* you'll know the play the game based on onscreen button prompts and some real-time walking about. *Heavy Rain* caters for a range of potential players by easing up on the more complex button-mashing for those unfamiliar with a DualShock. The button that picks up a cup of hot coffee may be the very same that shoots a gun-wielding suspect in the face during a botched interrogation – it's the context in which the button massaging happens that important. That's where the weight comes from.

As a result, Heavy Rain is fresh spin on the point-and-click genre, and one that will very likely find a varied audience – but there are problems. The voice acting is patchy – and this is a serious issue for a game as wordy as this. It's the delivery more than anything, although some of the dialogue is just too unnatural. The dad, Ethan Mars, and his internal monologue always sounds like he's just been shown a card trick he doesn't understand – even during and after terrible circumstances. The voice actor playing Norman Jayden, the FBI agent, regularly

confuses 'get angry' with 'get upset and speak in a high voice'. We just don't buy that this guy is a fed.

The story stumbles periodically too, often due to the extraneous plot threads and ropey devices used to pad out the project. When you take what's essentially a plot for a two-hour Hollywood thriller and stretch it out to a reasonable game length, complete with multiple paths and endings, cracks are going to appear – and they do. We could've done with a few more of the loose ends tied up as well, but perhaps that's just us.

Also, for a game that prides itself so much on choice, there are a few too many occasions where the developers haven't accounted for some pretty obvious ones. We understand players will need a certain degree of shepherding in order to see the story unfold in one of the (presumably) many ways the developers intended. It's odd, however, that apparently no amount of testing uncovered any of these obvious other ways to act. You know that frustration you get when you're watching a film and a character onscreen just refuses to say or do something you would've personally done in a heartbeat? It's compounded here, because you're in charge. In Heavy Rain you get to choose whether or not to have a swig of water, or juggle fruit, or go to the toilet

WORSE THAN



BETTER THAN





The obligatory sex scene deep in the third act is altogether brainless ***

Baldy McCueball didn't love his new nickname

with the door open - but when one character comes into possession of a, let's say, big box o' clues, sprinting to a police station full of professional crime fighters begging for help isn't even on the menu.

The obligatory sex scene deep in the third act is altogether brainless too. It just seems tacked-on in order to smuggle another glimpse of the journo Madison Page's tits into proceedings (who, by this point we'd seen nude in a shower, undies-around-the-ankles on the can, and gyrating topless for a fat nightclub mogul). We're really trying not to spoil anything here, but rest assured - at this point in the story - the character invovled truly does have something a little more

Still, we'd be lying if we said we weren't satisfied with the twisting mystery and its ultimate conclusion. We were addicted. We had to find the killer. It was as jarring to stop playing Heavy Rain as it is to turn off a movie halfway through. The story just falls on its face a little too much. That is, our story did anyway.

You see, we can't say whether or not your experience with Heavy Rain will be the same as ours. By the time we got to the end, two of our characters were dead. We won't say which. There'll be huge tracts of Heavy Rain you'll likely never see, nor will we. David Cage, the writer/director, would prefer if people didn't faff around with retrying chapters looking for the 'best' way through, or trying to 'win'. Regardless, Quantic Dream did include a chapter select feature to go back and play around.

There'll be a lot of chat about Heavy Rain in the year to come. It's true that there's nothing else like it on PS3. It's true that, technically, it's an absolute graphical powerhouse. Heavy Rain is a remarkable visual achievement. We won't disagree for a moment that Heavy Rain isn't deserving of

praise. It's different, it's thoroughly engaging and it looks incredible. What it is not. however, is a revolution.

Heavy Rain will challenge how gamers define a videogame. It's more than just a movie you participate in; your decisions drive the entire experience. You should play it. It's very clever, and lovingly crafted.

But it's not revolutionary.

You see, many decades ago we were introduced to a form of interactive storytelling. A form of storytelling where you would assume the role of a protagonist and make a series of choices that will ultimately determine the ending, and whether you live or die. They were called Choose Your Own Adventure books and it's estimated that around 250 million of them were sold in the '80s and '90s.

We'll extend kudos to Quantic Dream for continuing to evolve its unique brand of gameplay and storytelling. Heavy Rain is a true Choose Your Own Adventure game. For our press peers, however? Stop trying to convince us Quantic Dream just invented fire while everybody else is still rubbing two sticks together. - Luke Reilly

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Remarkable visuals, true cinematic camera placement and editing.

SOUND

The voice acting isn't always great, but the ambient effects are brilliant.

CONTROLS

Simple Simon-says button-tapping. Shouldn't be too taxing, but not for everyone.

REPLAY VALUE

Massive. Maybe you want to lose a play-battle against your son. Maybe you want to die...

VERDICT: Compelling different, addictive - Heav Rain is all of these thing Will appeal to gamers and non-gamers alike.





This'll make you a goddamned sexual tyrannosaur... just like us!

y now you would have surely heard of the kerfuffle surrounding the classification of Aliens vs Predator. True to its nature, the OFLC (or OCB, or whatever it's calling itself now), did the usual flip-flop as gamers collectively left out a groan of disbelief as AVP was refused classification.

This was swiftly followed by a fistbump and

WORSE THAN



BETTER THAN



sigh of relief as it made it through on appeal, completely intact! We don't know what their Midi-chlorian count is, but the Force is apparently strong with Sega, as some last minute Jedi mind-tricks got this puppy over the line. We're most certainly grateful it did, as AVP is one of the most diverse and true-to-its-source material titles we've

seen in quite some time.

The single-player campaign is broken down into three separate sections, with you utilising each species and their unique skill-sets through first-person perspective. Though each only lasts four to five hours, you shoudln't feel gypped in the slightest by such a short outing, as there's 12-15 hours in total, and the length and balancing of each feels just right.

The marine campaign is by far the most engrossing and atmospheric ride, as it expertly replicates the nail-biting, edgeof-your-seat thrills of the Alien franchise. Bucking the trend, there's no zoom for your weapons, very limited ammunition and light is scarce (even with your flashlight and unlimited flares at your disposal). It's a genuinely unnerving, eerie traverse through this overrun Weyland-Yutani science outpost. There are some truly iconic moments, with aliens materialising from walls, brilliantly resembling the Giger masterpieces that inspired them. Facehuggers scramble from creepily opening eggs as Aliens skitter about any surface with such speed you'll almost

catch a glimpse of them in your peripherals a millisecond before they attack - even with the constant beeping of your motion tracker alerting you to the imminent threat

To offset the hundreds of Aliens and their queen, you'll lay the smack down on a few Predators towards the end of the campaign. Just as it should be, these encounters feel more like a mini-boss battle rather than a generic opponent attack. Your best bet is the chunky smart-gun that tracks their movement, cloaked or otherwise, or the powerful sniper rifle, though on sound effects alone it's hard to go past the stockstandard Pulse rifle.

You'd think an average grunt wouldn't stand a chance against such otherworldly adversaries or the new android enemy (resembling Bishop from the Alien films, on steroids), but the extremely effective melee system levels the playing field. After using and a to block, you'll be prompted to hit on or to counter and put that xenomorph down for good. In fact, you'll find melee your best friend as a means to conserve ammo, plus bitch-slapping





I'LL GET INSIDE YOUR FACE!

Nowadays limited editions are bollocks, offering trinkets like a mere four-page comic book, player skin, or bonus weapon for your hard earned dollar. However, the AVP Hunter edition is so awesome, it's harder to resist than pole dance from Jessica Alba, as Scarlett Johansson makes you a sandwich and Megan Fox nibbles your feet. You get a steel case, art book, Weyland-Yutani badge and downloadable maps, but where this goes from ho-hum to certified cool is the poseable goddamned Facehugger. Expect Facebook to be rife with pics of dudes wrapping these around the old noggin. We know we will be.



an Alien or Predator to the ground and unloading a double barrel of pain to the cranium never gets old. Trust us.

After coming to grips with standardised shooting, AVP throws the world on its head when playing as Alien. Surprisingly, there's a bit of a story to go with the xenomorph campaign. You're 'Specimen Six' a warrior drone of above-average intelligence who quickly escapes and runs amok.

Those with vertigo, ye be warned, you could be losing your lunch, as the Alien can adhere to pretty much any surface, gravity be damned. Here, the in-your-face shooter becomes all about stealth, as you become invisible, stalking your prey, freeing your brethren and obeying your queen. This is a fantastic recreation with the Alien's sprint something to behold, as you slink across rooftops and ceilings, avoiding sentry guns, circling marines and using hiss to distract as

you shadow your next kill. You may even wish to harvest science officers (displayed in green) by grabbing them from behind and letting your Facehugger buddies give them a little kiss.

To be honest, the death animations are the most violent we've ever seen, with tails through the eye sockets, chest cavity ruptures, slit throats, brutal decapitations, and punching your second set of teeth through skulls. Considering these were in the namesake movies, and only garnered a MA15+ rating at best, we feel it's in keeping with the style and tone. You'll often put yourself in harm's way to get a glimpse of yet another way to munch through some marine's head.

After the second campaign draws to a close as you create a new brood (no surprise to anyone who's seen the movies), you'll play the most devastating of the bunch, the Predator. Already impressive at this point, Predator is where AVP really shines. From the cloak, to jumping from tree to tree, the classic triangular targeting shoulder cannon, discs and spear, this baby has it all. True to the films, your cloak disappears in water and if you've a penchant for melee kills, be careful, as it also dissipates during grabs. Brutal doesn't even get close, with heads removed with spinal columns intact, blade through the heart, simple decapitations, and our favourite, pulling off the head and spine through the chest! Un-freakin'-believable!

All your sophisticated weaponry drains power, which is in scarce supply, so you'll need to rely on stealth, distraction (whispering to marines and such), or long







range attacks via disc and the kick-arse spear. You've got dual vision modes with the iconic sweep as you switch between thermal vision and Alien identifier. The background music is ripped right from the cinema, as are the trademark Predator mandible click noises that cement the tone from the first marine down, to the final battle versus a nasty surprise.

This is how movie-inspired titles should be done. Three intense experiences, through the eyes of three entirely different species, all with remarkably differing play styles and arsenals. Also, the co-op survival, and various adversarial multiplayer modes just serve to be the icing on the cake. Wonderfully visualised, incredibly immersive and true to its inspiration, we want more. How often does a licensed title elicit that kind of response? Dave Kozicki

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Sexified! The Marines' sections are dark and claustrophobic, the Aliens' motion-blurred to reinforce sleekness and the iconic Predator thermal scan will have you whispering, "Over here" time and time again.

SOUND

Perfection, with all campaigns brilliantly scored to reflect their movie counterparts.

CONTROLS

Sheer poetry in motion, with each outing a total readjustment from the previous one, though the Predator's jump could be a tad more user friendly.

REPLAY VALUE

Definitely worth several play-throughs, plus there's the whole multiplayer business to boot!

VERDICT: Possibly the greatest movie-inspired title ever. This positively oozes atmosphere and is a must for the fans.





REVIEW

Army of Two The 40th Day



WORSE THAN

BORDERLANDS



BETTER THAN

ARMY OF TWO







INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: EA MONTREAL | PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$109.95

ARMY OF TWO: THE 40TH DAY

Set your fistbump to 'destruction'



new game comes out and one of the first questions gamers ask is 'does it have co-op?' This sequel, like its maligned predecessor, has it like a dorm party has beer.

The original game was an average action title, let down by niche gameplay moments, such as rigid, predetermined sniping opportunities for you and your buddy, and horrendous racial stereotyping. It was also injected with a 'frat boy' tone that was cringe worthy in places, as the two protagonists, Rios and Salem, swapped phrases Michael Bay would've loved to have in *Bad Boys*. EA Montreal has learned from its mistakes, however *The 40th Day* still does something wrong for every one thing it does right.

Set exclusively in Shanghai, the two mercenaries are quickly embroiled in a terrorist attack on the city and must fight their way out, usually by ducking from cover to cover and working together to out-flank and out-shoot the private army that's tearing the city to shreds. Buildings you're in explode, planes crash, and out of control choppers lazily slam into skyscrapers.

The attitude from the outset is that it takes two, baby, to make it through. Enemies will take you to pieces, mostly through their sheer numbers and firepower than intelligence, and it's damned hard to judge

just how much damage you're taking. Having a partner that can take the heat and draw attention while you flank around is essential so that you can do the same for them.

Playing the campaign solo is frustrating. Your partner is usually intelligent, though getting them in just the right spot means you'll be thinking for two. Commands – stop, follow and lead – are mapped on the d-pad, and can be defensive (just doing what you asked) or offensive (constantly firing at enemies whilst doing what you asked). It means that you have to look out for where your partner is, and how he can best serve the purpose. When it works, it's a dream and thoroughly satisfying. When it doesn't, like in some boss fights, death is frequent and you'll be going back to the last checkpoint, and suffering the excruciating load time again and again.

In co-op things get better as you can communicate more effectively, though the rest of the game's flaws still flare up. It looks great in these screenshots but feels a bit woolly in motion, and would have benefited from more polish going in to the environmental textures. The 'heal partner' button is the same as sprint, and the dialogue is still peppered with meat-head phrases.

It's hard to imagine anyone being passionate about the first game, but those loyalists will find a slew of improvements

here. If you passed the first time around we do recommend you try it out. It's by no means great, but for some dumb, short-lived fun with a like-minded mate, you're in the right place. **Paul Taylor**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

A lively city, decent character animation but scratchy graphics spoil the immersion. The HUD's slick.

SOUND

Meaty explosions, but the audio balance is way off, so dialogue wavers. Plus, Nolan North is in it.

CONTROLS

Sometimes unresponsive when taking hostages, and the same button is used to run, roll and heal.

REPLAY VALUE

Completionists will pore over all the morality moments, and there is a limited multiplayer mode.

VERDICT: It's still dumb but a lot tighter and more fun than the original. Just make sure you play it in co-op, okay?



HEART OF DARKNESS

At various points in the story you'll be presented with a 'morality moment', where you have two paths you can take. For instance, spare the security guard and take the guns, or put him down to tool up? Whatever you do, the result is animated in comic-book style pages that show just what happened according to you choice. We like.





Dark Void







INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: ADVENTURE | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ | DEVELOPER: AIRTIGHT GAMES | PLAYERS: 1 | RRP: \$109.95

DARK VOID

Where good ideas come to die

here is no way to escape this following sentence: *Dark Void* is like *Uncharted* with jetpacks, but without the charm, fun and production values of Naughty Dog's masterpiece.

It's an adventure game, with you controlling William Grey, a cargo pilot. Will's sent into the Bermuda triangle and as fate has it his ex-girlfriend Ava joins him, as she's responsible for the cargo. Cue sexual tension. After they crash land Will and Ava find out they're in the Void, a world between worlds, where humans are fighting aliens and robots. Nikola Tesla, the famous inventor, is also trapped in the Void and equips Will with a jet pack to help the humans in the war.

The story starts out as classic sci-fi, but it's unengaging, quickly becoming ludicrous, and the gameplay is a litany of missed

opportunities. Combining on-foot firefights and jetpackfuelled platforming with free-flving acrobatics ought to be a blast but it feels lame, due to hollow physics and gun play that provides little impact or feedback. There are also moments, like seeing a huge ship hanging precariously halfway down a waterfall in the first few

levels, that should

be breathtaking but the game fails to make any of these sights into a spectacle, instead becoming yet another drab shoot out.

It is possible to seamlessly go from being on-foot to jetting through the glorious blue but your ascent upwards feels like a plane crash in reverse. Performing stunts as you evade attacks is a lot of fun, and your pack is blessed with unlimited shells to spray at the flying enemy craft.

Coming back to earth is another brief shining moment. Gently gliding whilst raining bullets on the robotic troops below is cool, though the amount of ammo needed to permanently flick their switch to 'off' is outrageous. Instead of unloading 60-odd bullets you can usually land a couple of overpowered melee attacks once you're on solid ground to shut down most foes.

Dark Void could've masked its underwhelming nature if its graphics and sound design had more weight to them. Everything needs more than a polish as this looks halfbaked, with low-res textures giving no spark to the Void. Enemies have little variety, and the sound of weapons repeating their rattat-tat or pew-pew is hollow. Nolan North (see Sound Advice) voices Will, but gives little to the role and all you'll think about is Nathan Drake as he busts out a clever quip here and there.

It's a shame that Dark Void ended up this way. The premise of a jet pack alone teases awesomeness but the experience ends up being boring, stymied by uninspiring graphics, lacklustre sound and dull, dull combat. Paul Taylor

The Watchers. They watch SOUND ADVICE

As we said, Nolan North voices Will, and we can only guess North's instructions were to "be like Drake". Will always has a quip in any situation, though he doesn't have the same gravitas or distinctive nature as Nate. Bear McCreany, the man behind the music for sci-fi TV series Battlestar Galactica, composed Dark Viola's score. It's very rich, comprised of a 63-piece ensemble but doesn't lift the game out of the doldrums. Sorry Nolan. Sorry Bear.

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

A tidy HUD shows off the below benchmark graphics and boring world.

SOUND

Underwhelming score and effects that don't add much life to the so-so action.

CONTROLS

Cool cover system though taking off in tight spaces is a gamble with death.

REPLAY VALUE

Once you've spent a weekend with this, there's not much reason to go back into the Void.

VERDICT: Someone forgot to add 'fun' to the jet pack. There are so many better adventure games to play rather than this.



WORSE THAN

UNCHARTED





Guitar Hero: Van Halen

WORSE THAN

GUITAR HERO: METALLICA



BETTER THAN

POST-2009 VAN HALEN







INFO

FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: MUSIC | RELEASE: MARCH | DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION | DEVELOPER: UNDERGROUND DEVELOPMENT | PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$89.95









GUITAR HERO: VAN HALEN

Ain't talkin' bout love...

he third single band *Guitar Hero* title, *Guitar Hero: Van Halen* was released in the US late last year. It was the fourth *GH* title of 2009, and that doesn't include *DJ Hero* and *Band Hero*.

Unfortunately (and this likely explains the wait) Guitar Hero: Metallica or Rock Band: The Beatles this is not. Each of those titles captured the bands involved far more faithfully than this. In those games the admiration for the bands involved is evident. In GHVH it isn't.

For a game obviously pitched first and foremost at ardent Van Halen fans, for instance, it seems odd that huge parts of the band's history are totally ignored. Michael Anthony, bass player of 31 years, is snubbed, as are any songs originally sung by Sammy Hagar or Gary Cherone. What we get is Van Halen in their current form, with David Lee Both back on vocals for what (we think) is the fourth time he's returned, and Eddie's son Wolfgang on bass. This gets weird when you finish the lucklustre career mode and unlock 'classic' Van Halen, when Wolfgang is simply stuffed into some retro clobber and wheeled out on stage with the rest of them. Wolfgang would've been lucky to have been a twitch in his father's ballbag at the height of Van Halen's popularity.

Everything's functional, and a lot of the songs are great to play. The songs are, in most cases, a lot tougher than any of the tracks in Guitar Hero Aerosmith – and there are a lot of good ones. Playing five minutes of keyboard on guitar in 'Jump' is odd, but we enjoyed most of what is on offer. Unfortunately, large parts of GHVH just feel phoned-in. It just doesn't feel particularly definitive. The career mode is little more than just a series of songs – it tells nothing of Van Halen's rise to fame.

Progress made with *Guitar Hero 5* suddenly vanishes. Drop-in/drop-out play is absent. The ability to export anything is missing too. What gives?

It also doesn't help that at least nine of the non-Van Halen tracks are already available on the *Rock Band* platform. It certainly makes it a slightly less tempting proposition for fans who straddle both camps.

Faith in this project sunk so low in the US that free copies were given away with Guitar Hero 5 when it was released late last year. It massively undermined the game, but as a value add-on you really couldn't fault it. It's really not a great game by any stretch, but a big swag of Van Halen tunes for the price of on-the-house is nothing to complain about.

Down here, however, it's virtually a full-

priced title. Just shy of 100 clams is far too rich for our blood, especially for such a flawed game. **Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:

PRESENTATION

Should've stuck with the younger avatars. These modern ones aren't working for us.

SOUND

No complaints, unless you count Altar Bridge as a sound. Ha. And you thought Creed blew.

CONTROLS

Nothing out of the ordinary here. The charting seems robust enough to us.

REPLAY VALUE

If you don't have Rock Band this could sneak into your disc swapping cycle now and then.

VERDICT: Like him or otherwise, Eddie Van Halen is a guitar hero, no doubt. This game just doesn't reflect that.



MIGHT AS WELL JUMP

As of few years back Van Halen has sold 90 million albums worldwide and have had the most number-one hits on the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart. It's easy to see why you'd make a music starring the band - we just can't see why it wasn't done better. Wolfgang Van Halen is reportedly a big fan of the series, and chose all the support songs. We wonder if he's played Guitar Hero: Metallica.

Vancouver 2010





FORMAT: PS3 | GENRE: SPORTS | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA DEVELOPER: EUROCOM | PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$99.95

Things go downhill fast

NCOUVER 2010

n Vancouver...

No business like snow business

umbers are important here. In Vancouver (the game), there are 14 events that riff on seven different sports, 24 nations confirmed. In Vancouver (the actual games in the actual city) there will be 86 events on 15 different sports. More than 80 nations are anticipated to be there.

Quite a discrepancy, and it shows. It feels like something's missing.

Everything, however, it given a good amount of polish and an unhealthy injection of SEGA's familiar cock-rock as well as bland nupunk during events. Your first selection from the simple but attractive menu screen should be to turn the music off. From there, pick your

> sport and nation and you're away.

At times you're superbly immersed in the sport, when vou're down a ski jump your skis violently vibrate in the tracks before you come off the lip. Bobsleigh, too, is a blast once you get the hang of counter intuitively steering out of then into a corner. This is enhanced when you go to the first-person view

point, the falling snow flicking off the side of your virtual goggles.

Honestly, you'll be hooked for a time on the Alpine Skiing events as it gets very fast, and is definitely easier and more intuitive as you see the action through the goggles. Sound effects are chunky and it sounds like it would hurt to stack it down the mountain. It's also quite pretty and runs smoothly, despite ropey replay animation.

However. The fun ends on Ladies' Aerials, where you pick two types of jumps to perform, and must twiddle the thumbsticks in slow circles to nail the performance. You're graded on more than just your stick work as you have to get your angle of take-off just right as well as the right moment to land, but this main mechanic seems so remote and comes off being pointless. It's an unwelcome hangover from Beijing's diving. Speed skating, too, is a shambles, needing delicate refinements on the shoulder buttons and elite button mashing skills to accelerate

The challenge pyramids, a separate option to the crippled Olympic games, add some much needed life where each event has different criteria in order to complete. You might have to pass through gates as fast as you can to make a certain accumulative speed in a slalom even, or finish in a certain time in the bobsleigh, or land in a certain zone off the ski jump. It's not addictive but it does mask that there's not much to this.

It's a pity that Vancouver is missing so

much. One of the best events, biathlon (where you have to ski and then shoot targets) is MIA - 2K included it last time and now it's gone. So is ice hockey, moguls, and even curling, which is kinda crap but good for a laugh. Vancouver, then, is unfortunately as appealing as a yellow-snow sandwich. . Paul Taylor

PRESENTATION

Slick interface from the menu screens to the streamlined HUD

Genuinely awful music offset by solid effects, like howling wind, laboured breathing and skis on snow.

CONTROLS

Stick it in first person mode and you'll be sweet, mostly. Speed skating is a bit ropey.

REPLAY VALUE

Little, as there's sod all to keep you entertained. It needs more content and structure.

VERDICT: Moments of brilliance gone to waste in what could have been a great game. The handful of events last for about one afternoon.



WORSE THAN

BEING BRADBURY



BETTER THAN

BELJING 2008



TERRET

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...

ESSENTIAL

Download this...

Yakuza 3



Or, until the game this action packed

Just Cause 2 vehicle stunts



We've never found a video this side of Youtube where demo of the game's

Guilty Gear



Sure it's old, but this is a gem. And it's dirt cheap for one of the system's best brawlers. For less than \$10 you'd be

CoD: World at Var map bundle



we'll forgive you for not grabbing these maps. Veterans, packs released so far, for less than \$40.

Hoc Party



Got a PSP but noone to play with? Dry your eyes. This free download lets you play Ad Hoc games over the net. INFO GENRE; MUSIC | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: HARMONIX PLAYERS: 1-4 RRP: VARIES

ROCK BAND DLC UPDATE

The hits just keep on coming

ave after wave of killer rock continues to hit Rock Band, easily the best-supported music game around.

The past weeks have brought with 'Bulls on Parade' by Rage Against the Machine and 'Godzilla' by Blue Öyster Cult - hard-rocking tracks that are plenty of fun to shred.

A six-track Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers pack didn't really light us on fire, although an Alice in Chains five-pack (including 'Grind', 'Heaven Beside You' and

'We Die Young') was neat.

A Blink-182 three-pack satisfied any need for more crowd-friendly pop-punk, and there's no denying the tracks ('First Date', Adam's Song' and 'I Miss You') aren't catchy.

Prior to that we suffered through a woeful country pack, with the only track worth a mention being 'The Gambler' by Kenny Rogers. It's basic, but great for boozy parties.

Other tracks we've grabbed include 'Gives You Hell' by The All-American Rejects, '(If You're Wondering If I Want You To) I Want You To' by Weezer, 'Club Foot' by Kasabian, 'The Sounds of Silence' by Simon & Garfunkel and a Nivana three-pack featuring 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', 'Lithium' and 'Come As You Are'.



VERDICT:

Plenty to download, as usual. Our DLC count has ticked over 300 now, and we're slightly concerned we're going to need a bigger harddrive sooner rather than later

INFO GENRE: PLATFORMER / DISTRIBUTOR: SONY / DEVELOPER: MEDIA MOLECULE PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$9.95

TTLEBIGPLANET

Swim, splash and dive all over the LBP-niverse

ave you been to LittleBigPlanet lately? Some of you must have because it now sports over a million user-generated levels. Certainly a generous number of these are crap, but percentage-wise you've got a pretty good chance of some top shelf levels.

Helping this along is the Pirates of the Caribbean Level Kit (not to be confused with the costume pack). See, although we've had a pretty constant stream of DLC for LBP, 90 per cent of it has been overpriced costume and sticker packs. Rejoice, as quantity has brought in quality.

For \$9.95 you get some delightful, if a trifle short, water-heavy levels (based extremely loosely on POTC) plus the water itself for use in making your own levels.

Already the changes have been dramatic. No longer do "water levels" require blue glass and a rocket pack, you can now swim through briny depths that, like all elements of LBP,



act and react realistically, making the already spectacular-looking graphics sing.

Plus an improved search feature makes the good levels easier to find.

VERDICT:

If you've grown tired of LBP, or more to the point haven't played for a while, log on and check out this new wrinkle on an already delightful title. It's well worth 10 bucks

INFO GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: NOW | DISTRIBUTOR: 2K | DEVELOPER: GEARBOX SOFTWARE | PLAYERS: 1-4 | RRP: \$12.95

BORDERLANDS DLC: MAD MOXXI'S UNDERDOME RIOT

Dyin' time's here

adically departing from the storydriven narrative of the main game and the debut load of DLC is this arenabattle chapter. There's no real solid story, just that the titular Mad Moxxi is looking for another husband so decides to pit waves and waves of enemies against whoever dares enter. It doesn't really matter as the focus is on combat in this Mad Max pastiche.

Newbies need not apply, both because you need to have access to the fast travel network, and also because it's hard. It's harder than if diamond and Kevlar had an offspring, and coated it in nails. We can't recommend playing this unless you've hit level 50 and have a couple of friends willing to go toe-to-toe with the psychos that come at you in each of the arenas. Even with just one partner it's nearly impossible, and attempting it in single player is for shut-ins only.

While the point of, or at least fun in, Borderlands was based on killing foes for XP, you don't get that here and the loot you do get is pitiful compared to roaming the landscape hunting for weapons. Instead, it's all about enduring waves of enemies as the round conditions change at Moxxi's whim.

Sometimes gravity will lessen, or you and enemies will move at supersonic speed. Other times you do massive damage with sniper rifles, or have to get critical hits. The conditions stack up, so it pays to have a range of weapons available.

Ultimately though, it's hard to recommend - which is a shame. It's a cool concept, but since the rewards are so few and the pain you have to go through to finish even the first arena is so great (truly, set aside an hour at least just for this) it means Moxxi may be a spinster forever more. & Paul Taylor





BEST GAMES TO PLAY ONLINE

Enemy AI making you yawn? Feel like conquering the world? Take your skills online with this trio



MODERN WARFARE 2

Once you have a good connection, this is an undisputable gem. It just keeps on giving, and the pool of quality players just keeps growing.



COLIN MCRAE DIRT 2

Take it at face value and this is a load of fun. The netcode's robust, and offers arcade thrills with a simple levelling system.



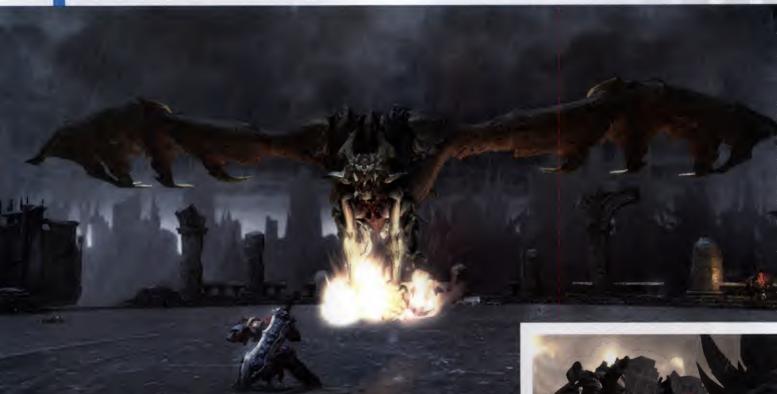
BATTLEFIELD 1943

Super-addictive and super-easy to drop in to a game. An example of doing things the simple way is sometimes the best.

SIGHT

Tips and cheats

DARKSIDERS BOSS GUIDE "Something, something, Darkside..."



laying Darksiders on normal difficulty shouldn't give you folks much hassle. However, if you're economically trying to score all of the "finish the game on x difficulty" Trophies in one fell swoop (by jumping straight in and playing it on Armageddon difficulty), you may just get your arse kicked. Luckily, we've had our arses pre-kicked much earlier on, and we can offer you sage advice on how to best the baddest bosses in the game

QUEEN TIAMAT

Phase 1:

Initially, Tiamat will take flight and fly about the outside section of the stage and heave fireballs at you. Fiery death can be avoided by a well-timed dash, and you'll usually need to do it three times. Tiamat will then stop moving for a few seconds, which is your cue to grab one of the inert bombs (y'know, the red balls of explosive snot) so that you can throw it at her. You must then use your Crossblade to target first fire, then Tiamat's bomb to make her drop to the rooftop. When this happens, get out Chaoseater and get stabby. Über stabby.

Phase 2:

Pissed off with the beating, Tiamat will then resume her flying pattern. Rather than hawk lit loogies at you she'll try swooping at you instead. Dash to the side, rinse, repeat. After she makes three unsuccessful swoops she'll pause for a breather. Do exactly what you did before.

Phase 3:

Tiamat will then land on the roof a start stomping around. Use the lock-on feature to keep an eye on her, and to keep some distance. If you move in too close you'll earn a big scratch in the face or she'll launch into the air and land on your head. Conversely, if you stay too far away you'll need dodge a cluster of four fireballs. Wait until Tiamat charges at you, wait until the Quick-Time event makes you mash a button to punch her back. Once she's down get in there and chop up a storm. Keep this up and you'll eventually trigger an end cinematic that features a touching, heart-to-gauntlet discussion between War and Tiamat.

GIANT CRYSTAL SPIDER

Spiders. Why did it have to be spiders? What you need to do is wait until this hideous monstrosity rears back and tries to inhale you. Once that happens, use your Abyssal Chain to grab a body dangling from the roof, and pelt it into the hideous maw. As the spider chows down, run around behind it and, well, punch it in the arse with your Tremor Gauntlet to crack away its crystal armour.

That's your weak-spot, right there. Now you need to used timed jumps to avoid flash wave stomping attacks using timed jumps. Wait until it tries to suck you in again. Do what you did before, and slash that weak-point until it's

SILITHA

Silithia will spend most of the fight teleporting about the stage and trying to catch you off guard with melee attacks. Watch her fake teleport twice or so, and then use your Abyssal Chain to grab her when she pauses for a second. When you get into face range, just smash her with your favourite air combo. Keep doing this until she collapses, at which point you should get in close with the Chaoseater again. Once enough pain has been delivered, Silithia will take to the ceiling. Several grapple points appear, grab one, and swing up into her to trigger your victory cinematic

Don't let the heavenly wings fool you, Uriel is a badass. Get in close early on and dish out only a few swings of a combo so that you can dash out of range when she retaliates - which she will, and hard. Do this for long enough and Uriel will take to the skies and unleash a storm of dropping swords. To predict how to dodge them; watch for the blue glowing spots on the ground and dash accordingly. Stick and jab, bob and weave through the swords, then resume what you were doing before. When you have dealt out enough pain you'll get a cutscene



It's time to put those portal skills to use, Sneaky McTeleporter. While Straga is busy monologuing at you, slap a portal on the ground marker to your left. Dodge his first few attacks and wait until he raises his bommyknocker for a breather. Quickly fire a portal onto the side of this upraised hammer. When he holds the hammer behind his head for a swing, jump into your floor portal to appear behind Straga's head. Hit your action button to make him grovel onto the stage and chop him in the face. After a bit, Straga will summon some minions to kill you. Stick to the extreme left to avoid getting smooshed while you mop them up. Rinse, and repeat the whole process

THE DESTROYER

Keep your distance from this dragon form as it slashes and charges at you. Summon Ruin and time a decent hit on his side as he's charging to make him trip over. Ride Ruin as close as you can to this fallen dragon's belly, jump off your steed, and get dicing with Chaoseater. After repeating this process a few times The Destroyer will get stampy in an effort to knock you down, just keep your distance. When that doesn't work the dragon will take to the skies and swoop down to squish you, just stay on Ruin and use his charge to keep yourself ahead of the damage area. Wait until he lands on the ground and continue the original process until a finisher action button pops up.

Phase 2:

In this second phase The Destroyer will return to his humanoid form. Unfortunately this form comes with a ridiculously long sword which dishes out semi-circular horizontal slashes, overhand smashes, and he can belt out homing energy blasts on the ground. Technically you can escape all of these attacks, but you'll need the reflexes of a mongoose. Just like Uriel, you need to get in close, deliver a sensible amount of hits from a combo, and dash the hell out of range. Once you've cleaned his clock for long enough a quick-time action event starts. Button mash like hell to push him back and dish out a heap of damage. After that happens he'll hover out of range and hurl boulders at you, which you should promptly dodge like a ninia. When he lands, watch out for some new moves; a teleport and an devastating uppercut combo. Just keep your wits about you, dodge like a bandit, and watch for those button mashing events. Once you've locked swords (and won) three times The Destroyer will have to rename himself The Destroyed.





IN SIGHT

Tips and cheats

THE SABOTEUR OBTAIN ALL THE TOUGHEST PERKS

You should make a special effort to obtain as many of these as early as possible - earning these abilities will make the rest of the game a lot more entertaining. They must be obtain in Bronze, Silver and Gold order. Here are the hardest ones to get.

BRAWLING

Gold - Grim Reaper

Stealth kill five Generals to unlock 'Touch of Death' attack.

Tips: Nazi Generals are scattered across the map. They'll have a permanent yellow circle around them. Sneak up from behind in a disguise, kill him and run away when his guards see you, or take out the guards from afar first. Either way the 'Touch of Death' is awesome. You can stealth kill an enemy in plain sight and walk away before he drops dead.

HARDWARE

Silver - War on Terror

Kill five Terror Squad Nazis, unlock the .44 Pistol in the shop.



Tips: Terror Squad Nazis arrive in half-tracks. Find a turret and get your alarm level up. Kill every Nazi you see and you should manage.

Gold - Paint the Town Red

Destroy a zeppelin and a Wulf tank during the same Nazi Alarm, unlock the Panzershrek in the shop.

Tips: There's a Wulf tank you can hijack at the south east portion of the map. Find Bercy on the map and travel east as far as Sean can go. It's adjacent to no-man's land. Use it to get a bead on a zeppelin to get your wanted level up (you need to facing up a hill) then hop out and blow the tank yourself. It'll respawn where you found it, don't worry.

SNIPING

Gold - Longshot

Score 10 'Double Kills' using a sniper scope, unlock Terror Scoped Rifle in the shop.

Tips: Look for enemies standing around in pairs. Stand close get an angle on them. Aim for the upper torso. The Terror Scoped Rifle is worth it.

EXPLOSIVES

Gold - A Real Hellion

Kill 10 Nazis in 10 seconds with RDX or dynamite, get no knockdowns from explosions. **Tips:** Find an enemy outpost that is heavily guarded. Go in disguised and place RDX near/ on several targets. Be sure to have 'Plant Sabotage' active and not 'Trigger Explosive'. Once you have placed enough RDX in the area

DEMOLITIONS

begin triggering the explosives.

Silver - Mad Bomber

Destroy five Nazi vehicles with dynamite in 300 seconds, unlock RDX in the shop.

Tips: Store a Nazi vehicle in your garage. Request it, explode it, repeat. Cheating, but it works.

Gold - Blockbuster

Destroy three Wulf tanks using RDX or dynamite, unlock Super RDX upgrade. **Tips:** Destroy the previous Wulf tank three times, or any other you see parked around, or a stored Wulf tank from your garage.

SABOTAGE

Gold - Urban Renewal

Destroy four Nazi train bridges and planting explosives while disguised is no longer suspicious.

Tips: You'll need the bridge destruction kit you'll get early in Act II. The rest is easy. This Perk is hugely worth it.

MAYHEM

Gold - The Right of Way

Destroy 20 Nazi vehicles with one vehicle, unlock machine-guns on the Aurora.

Tips: Wulf tank. You know the one.

MECHANICS

Silver - Hijacker

Collect every Nazi vehicle, get free vehicle repairs in the garage.

Tips: Just buy this Perk from the store using the 'Luck of the Irish' upgrade.

Gold - Wheelman

Collect and restore all Civilian, Race, and military vehicles, get the ability store armour in the garage.

Tips: Just buy it using the 'St Paddy's Day' upgrade. Now you can store that Wulf tank and order it any time you want.

EVASION

Gold - Europe's Most Wanted

Escape from a level 5 alarm, and now you can use hiding places at Alarm levels 4 and 5.

Tips: Escape on foot to the well in the countryside to the north. Just stay out of sight, check your map.





1.21 GIGAWATTS

If you were born after the '80s, we feel sorry for you, as this trophy is a homage to Doc Brown from Back to the Future. Fairly straight forward simply zap 25 enemies to death using a shock weapon. A rifle or SMG is your best bet to get there in 'lightning' quick time.

7 THINGS TO DO IN...

THE SABOTEUR

We've been addicted to liberating Paris from the grip of Nazi tyranny all month. Here are a few things you must do!



1 SMOKE ATOP A GIANT POLE

Some people, including us, have made the mistake of climbing the Eiffel Tower in The Saboteur. It's possible, but unnecessary. There are elevators. At any rate, get to the top and you'll be treated to a great, if a little cloudy, view of the city of love. Not even zeppelins cruise this high.



2 TANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

Complete enough of the Perks and you'll be able to store German armour in your garage. Combine this with the getaway ability and you'll be able to get a Wulf tank delivered straight to you, when and where you want. It's pretty darn handy, and there's no limit to it. Got a tricky objective coming up? Order a tank to make thnigs easier. A lot easier.



3 HIT THE STAGE

Unless you're blind you'll notice there's always a topless woman singing to a crowd of drunken Nazis in the strip joint you call home. You can't draw a weapon in here, but you can get their attention. Jump up on stage and you'll be met with a chorus of boos and ieers. Try this at your local strip club. You can let us know how it went when you come out of your coma.



4 DON'T HAVE A COW, MAN

If you're wondering whether or not you can actually plant explosive charges on cows in The Saboteur, wonder no more. You can. Best of all, they don't even mind. They just stand, feasting on grass, while you strap a wad of RDX to their tasty torsos. Hit the detonator and the whole area will become a BBQ bonanza. There'll be slabs of beef all over the place



5 THE TOUCH OF DEATH

The Touch of Death is the best move in the game, hands down. Unlock it and you'll be able to shank Nazi soldiers in plain sight and walk away before he drops dead. By the time anybody realises you'll be away, stabbing somebody else. Used in conjunction with a stolen uniform you'll be an unstoppable, silent killing machine.



6 LED ZEPPLIN

You'll likely knock down plenty of these over the course of the game, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try to shoot one down as soon as possible. A Panzershrek will make short work of them, but the AA towers are probably your best bet (they're everywhere, and they don't cost 50 contraband to reload. Shoot one directly above you for the best view.



Opportunists, Yuri Orlov fans and hoarders, this is one for you. Find 50 guns and sell them on at any vending machine. It doesn't have to impossible, though once this dings you'll be itching to sell more. Bye-bye social



UNITED WE STAND

depends on whether you play in single player Hive, the Valut Boss, Sledge, Krom or Flynt Sledge, roughly seven hours in, with our



VERDICT:

everything is as it seems.

Intriguing sci-fi with an unexpected twist. Sam Rockwell does a great job and it's also an impressive directorial debut from Duncan Jones.

mystery begins to unravel it becomes clear that not





Cast: Tobin Bell, Costas Mandylor, Mark Rolston

Betsy Russell, Shawnee Smith Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

Saw VI concludes the "second trilogy" of the series (that focused on the posthumous effects of the Jigsaw Killer and the progression of his successor, Mark Hoffman). It also marks the directorial debut of Kevin Greutert (who served as the editor for all the previous instalments). In the film, Hoffman sets up a new trap for an health insurance executive while the FBI trails the last living Jigsaw accomplice suspect, Peter Strahm. Then a whole bunch of frightened people are hanged, speared, shot, crushed and dissolved.

We certainly admire the success Aussies James Wan and Leigh Whannell have found with this series, but we just don't see where all this is going to end. Are people really fascinated enough with watching people be creatively tortured to death to just keep watching it indefinitely? That's just messed up.



Surely torture-porn like the Saw series has lost its edge by now?



SMOKIN' ACES 2: ASSASSIN'S BALL

Director: P.J. Pesce

Cast: Tom Berenger, Ernie Hudson, Vinnie Jones

Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

Director Joe Carnahan (Narc, Smokin' Aces) has palmed this one off to unknown P.J. Pesce. Pesce is probably used to dealing with low budgets and crafting straight-to-video sequels by now (From Dusk Till Dawn 3: The Hangman's Daughter, The Lost Boys 2: The Tribe and Sniper 3 are all his work) - but this doesn't make Smokin' Aces 2 any good.

This prequel takes the original film's concept of a large group of various assassins all chasing one target, with the FBI fully aware of the situation and doing what they can to stop them. Unfortunately, the low cost look and feel is tough to ignore, and it feels like the plot gets additionally complicated towards the end for no other reason than to confuse everybody.

VERDICT:

Certainly not worth a purchase, even if you did like the original

THE RED BARON (M)

Odyssey

Key inspiration for Moon

Director: Nikolai Müllerschön

Cast: Matthias Schweighöfer, Til Schweiger, Lena

Headev. Joseph Fiennes Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

Aces of aces Baron Manfred von Richthofen is the most feared and celebrated pilot of the entire German air force in World War I. To him and his fellow wingmen, air combat is a sporting affair - events of technical challenge and honour, ignoring the terrible extent of war. Unfortunately, after falling in love with a beautiful nurse, Käte, Manfred realises he's being used as a propaganda tool. Caught between his disgust for the war and the responsibility for his squadron, he sets out to fly again. It's surprising a film commemorating a German war hero got off the ground in Deutschland, but what's more suprising is how little connection the film has with historical events. He's arguably the most famous fighter ace ever. If you need to jazz up his story, you're probably telling it wrong.

VERDICT:

Awesome dogfighting, but it yaws a little to far from the facts to fully engage





SORORITY ROW (MA15+)

Director: Stewart Hendler

Cast: Rumer Willis, Carrie Fisher, Audrina Patridge

Jamie Chung

Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

When a bunch of college girls decide to play a morbid practical joke on a cheating guy (by faking a girl's death), things don't go too well. Before you can say, "I know what you did last summer" she's stabbed with a tyre iron and killed. For realsies this time. Keen to cover up these shenanigans the surviving sisters and their male accomplice agree to dump the body and never speak of the incident again. Just after graduation, however, a mysterious killer begins stalking them all. It's a slasher film, so expect the cast to be outnumbered by a big pile of blonde corpses by the end.

VERDICT:

You could just watch the trailer instead, it covers the whole story anyway.



COUPLES RETREAT (M)

Director: Peter Billingsley

Cast: Vince Vaughn, Jason Bateman, Jon Favreau, Malin Ackerman, Kristin Davis, Kristen Bell, Faizon

Love, Kali Hawk, Jean Reno Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

When four couples embark on a journey to a tropical island resort, things don't go quite as planned. While one couple is there to work on their marriage, the other three set out to enjoy some fun in the sun. Unfortunately, when they discover that participation in the resort's couples therapy is not optional their group-rate vacation suddenly takes a turn. Unfortunately it's not a very entertaining one. It's hard to pinpoint why this went wrong with the talented cast involved, but it's simply just not funny enough.

VERDICT:

Come on, these guys did Swingers for crying out loud. Not good enough.

4



SURROGATES (M)

Director: Jonathan Mostow

Cast: Bruce Willis, Radha Mitchell, Rosamund Pike

Ving Rhames

Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

In the near future people are living their lives remotely from the safety of their own homes via robotic surrogates. These surrogates are physically perfect mechanical representations of themselves. It's an ideal world where crime, pain, fear and consequences don't exist. However, when the first murder in years sends shockwaves through the community, FBI agent Greer (Bruce Willis, and robot Bruce Willis in a LEGO man wig) discovers a vast conspiracy and must abandon his own surrogate, risking his actual life to unravel the mystery. We're sure the Wachowski Brothers' fingers were hovering above their lawyer's speeddial when they heard about this one.

VERDICT:

Gets the job done, but hardly worth a second watch. Surprisingly short too.

6







CLARKSON SHOOT-OUT (G)

Director: Richard Heeley **Cast:** Jeremy Clarkson **Available on:** DVD

Shoot-Out is one of Jeremy Clarkson's older TV specials, dating back to 2003. That means it's not entirely that relevant anymore. It normally doesn't matter, however, as Top Gear and Clarkson's other TV specials are almost always creative and quirky enough to entertain years down the track. Shoot-Out, surprisingly, not so much.

Clarkson does, at one point, tow a caravan at high-speeds with an Overfinch Land Rover. The gimmick? The caravan is upside down. The rest of the video is made up from a bit too much spinning out. It's good enough, and it's packed with plenty of precious metal (like the Vauxhall VX220 Turbo, the Aston Martin DB7 GT and many more) but it's missing some spark.

VERDICT:

Lacking a lot of the substance *Top Gear* and his other TV specials have.



SCRUBS: THE COMPLETE EIGHTH SEASON

Directors: Various

Cast: Zach Braff, Sarah Chalke, Donald Faison, John C. McGinley, Judy Reyes, Neil Flynn, Ken Jenkins Courteney Cox, Elizabeth Banks

Available on: DVD

Another awesome season of one of the better sitcoms around. Pay particular attention for the episode full of Sesame Street cameos – it's hilarious (and kind of heartbreaking, as usual).

Some of the cost-cutting measures begin to become visible, like key cast members being away for up to three episodes over the course of the season, but it's a great final season for a great show. Except that it isn't. They're now making another season, but replacing most of the cast. Sigh.

VERDICT:

Get season one through to eight and call it quits. Another one bites the dust.



NASH BRIDGES - THE FIRST SEASON (TBC)

Directors: Various

Cast: Don Johnson, Cheech Marin

Available on: DVD

Nash Bridges is a pretty routine cop show, but it was helped greatly by its cast and location. Don Johnson is fine as Nash, but it's the supporting cast that deserve a nod. Cheech Marin, in particular, plays a great sidekick. Marin and Johnson have great on-screen chemistry. San Francisco is a great city for a show also – it's such an interesting place.

About the only thing we remembered about Nash Bridges was that Don Johnson was reportedly boning Jody O'Keefe (who played his on-screen daughter) at the time – which is kinda weird. Other than that, we'd forgotten about it. We could still take it or leave it, but it's simple and easy to consume.

VERDICT:

You'd have to be a massive fan to run out and buy it, but it's easy to watch.





BLEACH THE MOVIE 2: THE DIAMONDOUST REBELLION (M)

Director: Noriyuki Abe

Cast: Akira Ishida, Masakazu Morita, Romi Paku

Available on: DVD

The long-running manga series Bleach has a minor PR issue. The demon-fighting high-schooler Ichigo Kurosaki may be the protagonist, but fan poll after fan poll points to the guy whose sword can turn into an ice dragon as being the most popular. So how do you reconcile that disparity in a motion picture? Simple: create a non-canonical yarn which ties the fates of the two together.

VERDICT:

Basically one long fight scene. Will make zero sense if you haven't seen the series



BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL -VOL. 1 (TBC)

Director: Koichi Mashimo Cast: Tomokazu Seki, Rina Satou

Available on: DVD

Manji's got a problem: he can't die. A swordsman living in feudal Japan, his follies have left him wracked by guilt - and he's sworn to slay 1000 villains to make amends, in the hope of ending his torment. Lucky for him, a spunky 16-year-old samurai bird wants to hire him for some extreme vengeance. And considering the size of the private army of criminal deviants who offed her old man. Manii could fill his quota before he knows. it. Lacks the exquisite linework of the original manga by Hiroaki Samura, but more than makes up for it in gore.

VERDICT:

Bloody, cheesy, and as mental as anything.

HALO LEGENDS (TBC)

Cast: Andy McAvin Available on: DVD/Blu-ray

You'll recall that there were two difference sequels to The Matrix. First there were the live action movies made by the Wachowski Brothers - over-produced cock-ups that only left the fans angry and confused. Then there was The Animatrix; an anthology of short films by the very best anime directors. The Animatrix was weird, and uneven, and a bit hit and miss - but it dared to do something imaginative with the franchise, and served to enrich the universe of The Matrix in a way its creators couldn't... or wouldn't. Halo Legends works the same magic on the popular FPS. It's an odd mix, with drama, tragedy, balls-out violence, and even comedy, plus enough back-story to bring you up to speed, even if you've never played Halo in your life.

VERDICT:

Leave the console wars behind and this anime mash-up may rock your world.

ICTOR: MASAHIRO ANDO CAST: TOMOYA NAGASE, YURI CHINEN, KOUICHI YAMADERA, NAOTO TAKENAKA AVAILABLE ON: DVD/BLU-RAY

SWORD OF THE STRANGER (MA15+)

ipping yarn - with codies of guts and blood. ns a wandering ronin, an Eastwoodue Man With No Name, who hires out amurai sword to an impetuous youth fleeing a drug-fueled international conspiracy. Finely crafted both in story and animation, the multi-layered plot is fine-tuned to deliver duel after duel, and spectacle after spectacle. Witness as samurai bad-asses torture, betray, double-cross, and triple-cross their way to a climax of bloody dismemberment. Topnotch animation, too - those who wish to fully savour the exquisitely choreographed fight scenes may wish to buy the Blu-ray edition.

VERDICT:

Samurai vs. Kung-Fu, in a sword-and-sorcery slugfest! It also has a cool story, bro. Watch it now.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY... Samurai Champloo Top-tier swordfighting

action

ITERMISSION

On the big screen



ALSO IN CINEMAS

The Hurt Locker (MA15+)

Director: Kathryn

Cast: Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, Brian Geraghty, Ralph Fiennes,

is a story about lives in combat, teamwork, and

The team's new leader, James (Renner) is a man

yourself about the 'good it's primarily about the characters. Destined to be

Shutter Island (MA15+) Director: Martin

THE BUZZ What's really going on behind-the-scenes

Judging the success of Avatar - which at time of writing had taken \$1.3 billion worldwide - we can expect to see more movies with an extra dimension. both on the silver screen and at home. There are, however, hidden dangers.

A 42-year-old Taiwanese man died after watching James Cameron's latest blockbuster in 3D. The man,

known only as Kuo, suffered from hypertension and it's being alleged the excitement of the movie possibly contributed to his brain haemorrhaging and him having a stroke 11 days later.

Sufferers of minor eye problems should also be aware, though it's highly unlikely you're going to be afflicted with death. The mental process required

to watch a 3D movie is more intense. the brain struggles, potentially causing headaches

If your depth perception ability is wonky, it's also possible that you just won't be able to watch 3D movies at all, as you're looking at 'virtual' objects, rather than the real thing. So, the question is, 2D or not 2D?





MAKE CHOICES FACE THE CONSEQUENCES

HEAVY RAIN

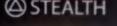
THE GAME IS JUST THE START A serial killer is on the loose, a city is paralysed with fear and the police are running out of leads. You play all four lead characters in a ground breaking new game, where your decisions affect the plot. Every action has an unexpected reaction. Every decision bas a consequence. Every choice has a price. Start an entirely new way of gaming, an entirely new way of gaming,

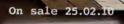
only on playStation®3. www.HeavyRainPS3.com





⊗IGNORE





HEAVY RAIN

0

ELS &



Strong violence, themes and sex scene



PlayStation 3



All the games that matter on PS3!

THE BEST **PSN GAMES**

Buy and play in vour home!

BRAID **DEVELOPER:** Hothead PLAYERS: 1



charming platformer that incorporates one of last decade's most used mechanics - time manipulation - whilst wrapped up in gorgeous graphics. And, it was all made by one man. Buy it.

WIPEOUT HD DEVELOPER: SCE PLAYERS: 1-8



Yes, it's a HD remix of tracks from the PSP versions, but HD is too sublime to ignore Utterly gorgeous, running at a blistering framerate and handles superbly. Mandatory.

EVERYDAY SHOOTER

DEVELOPER: Queasy PLAYERS: 1



Don't be fooled by the sparse art style. This cunningly blends music in with the action that turns it from a dual-stick shooting whimsy into a highly addictive blaster

FLOWER DEVELOPER hatgamecompany



High concept and totally pretty, it plays like a dream. Guide petals on the wind using the motion-sensing of your DualShock 3. You will be amazed.

MARVEL VS CAPCOM2 **DEVELOPER:** Capcom PLAYERS: 1-2



It's by no means 'straight' Street Fighter, and nor should it. Stuffed with 56 characters, this three-on-three brawle explosion. The HD treatment is superbly done.

BC REARMED DEVELOPER: GRIN



Bionic Commando Rearmed is a prime example of what many love about the PSN: being a platform for updates of classics. It's pure gameplay - and

SIMPLY THE BEST.

The best of the best of the best of the best



"GTAIV is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for - a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

"Easily the best PS3 exclusive to date, Uncharted 2 combines genre-defining visuals, high

> BRUTAL **LEGEND**

metal world. The funniest game of 2009,

boot. If God gave rock 'n roll to us then

it is settled: Tim Schafer is God. A true

with an absolutely killer soundtrack to

"A hilarious and engaging

story in an amazing heavy

adventure and cinematic intensity like nothing before. Don't miss the original either. Get both, this second,"

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-12





ASSASSIN'S CREED II

"A far more compelling story than the

revolutionary original, there's more to see and do, and more ways of dealing death than before. Ubisoft has tweaked the climbing mechanic to make it feel part puzzler, but all action."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1



MGS4: GUNS OF THE **PATRIOTS**

"An incredibly layered

gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. One of the best games available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely one of the top exclusives. Buy and play this videogame now. Seriously."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions **PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai Partners PLAYERS: 1-16



freakishly perverted. Smooth and stylish: the ultimate evolution of Devil May Cry style action."

skill to make it so well, and it takes

a Japanese mindset to make it so

BAYONETTA

"It takes balls to make

sexy, and weird. It takes

a game this violent,

DEVELOPER: Platinum Games **PUBLISHER: Sega**



DEVELOPER: Double Fine PUBLISHER: EA DI AVERS: 1-4





DRAGON AGE: ORIGINS

"The good utterly outweighs the bad. It's

daunting, but with such masterful storytelling, memorable characters and addictive adventuring, every hour invested is paid back double. Plus, BioWare swapped 'morality meters' for shagging."

DEVELOPER: BioWare

PUBLISHER: EA

PLAYERS: 1







"Taking the solid base of Oblivion and placing it into a post

apocalyptic wasteland always sounded like a great idea - and Fallout 3 proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth and enormity of it's incredible vision."

DEVELOPER: Bethesda **PUBLISHER:** Atari





"Worth your sweat. The combination of two campaigns equals a respectable 20+ hours of gameplay."

ASSAULT ON DARK ATHENA

DEVELOPER: Starbreeze Studios PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners PLAYERS: 1-12





KILLZONE 2

"Visually Killzone 2 runs through the competition like a bull in the

proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. Killzone 2 is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla **PUBLISHER: Sony** PLAYERS: 1-16





BIOSHOCK

"As a sub-par port, minus the promised extra content, BioShock is a

disappointment. BUT you'd be silly to miss out on what is undoubtedly one of the landmark games of this generation so far. In many ways, this is a must play."

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1





"It's almost like three games in one, stuffed with moments that will leave you shocked and breathless with excitement. Superbly crafted, MW2 is, with its older brother, a pinnacle of this generation's games."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-18



STURMOVIK: **BIRDS OF** PREY

"It's not an FPS, but shooting is all you do - in the skies above Europe. Head-turning attention to detail and intense action. Awesome, actually,"

DEVELOPER: Gaijir Entertainment PUBLISHER: AIE PLAYERS: 1-16





BORDER-LANDS

"Borderlands starts out great and only gets

better from there. It takes the best elements of RPGs and shooters and fuses them, and it's quite simply the most rewarding co-op to date.'

DEVELOPER: Gearbox are PUBLISHER: 2K PLAYERS: 1-4





CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR

Superior in many

ways to even Modern Warfare, this is a surprisingly superlative piece of software. Powerful, well-produced. stuffed with violence - it's fantastic. The action is relentless, the visuals buttery-smooth, the intensity savage we love it."

DEVELOPER: Treyarch **PUBLISHER:** Activision PLAYERS: 1-16



GHOST-BUSTERS

"Well-honed and accessible controls, some

spectacular visual effects, excellent pace, great level design, incredible attention to detail - all of these essential traits combined with the Ghostbusters universe and come together for a thoroughly addictive experience."

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality **PUBLISHER:** Sony PLAYERS: 1-4





FAR CRY 2

"At times overstretching itself, Far Cry 2's breath taking ambition can

often be its undoing, but it's still one of the best shooters out there. Plus, setting stuff on fire is still a ridiculous amount of fun."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1-16



TOP 5

GAMES TALKING **ABOUT GAMES**



ASSASSIN'S CREED II

A horse ride out of town and Ezio's rolled up to his uncle's villa. As they greet each other, uncle says in his most convincing accent, "Itsa-me, Mario!" No Luigi, though.



GTA III

Claude's on a mission called 'Two Faced Tanner' given to him by Yakuza mistress Asuka The aim: kill one of their drivers who is a 'strangely animated undercover cop'. An unsubtle dig at Driver



DRIV3R

Revenge! Tanner's given the chance to kill 10 men called Timmy Vermicelli, who all wore Hawaiian shirts and floaties. Why? Vice City's Tommy Vercetti would die as soon as he touched the wet stuff.



GTA SAN ANDREAS

Payback. As CJ sneaks into Madd Dogg's mansion, Dogg's playing a game, cursing "How come Refractions messed up so bad? Tanner you suck ass!" A nod to the bug-riddled Driv3r.



BRAID

Within the first 10 minutes of play and clearing a level, a wooden dinosaur rolls out of a stone building and says, "Your princess is in another castle." lassic Mario.

All the games that matter on PS3!

THE BEST PSP GAMES

Small system. Big games.

LITTLEBIGPLANET

DEVELOPER: SCE Cambridge **PUBLISHER:** Sony

Retaining all of the fun of one the PS3's most entertaining platformers, this version sacrifices little on the transistion to the small screen. Incredibly deep, engaging - and fun.

MH: FREEDOM UNITE **DEVELOPER:** Capcom **PUBLISHER:** THQ PLAYERS: 1-4

Monster Hunter is a system seller in native Japan. and it deserves that accolade here. It's an adventure game to lose your life to, and rewards in spades if you're able to put the effort in.



DEVELOPER: SCE Liverpool **PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-8**

Its predecessor, Pure, laid the groundwork. It's not that this does much that differently, it just does it better. Beautifully animated and weighted just right, its a futurist's eam come true.

GTA CHINATOWN WARS

DEVELOPER: Rockstar Leeds
PUBLISHER: Rockstar

Hilarious. Violent. Addictive. Yes, it's a port of a DS title, but it's a port done right, and still it rebels against the style of other GTA games. A tightly scripted, mature and entertaining package.

MGS: PORTABLE OPS

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions **PUBLISHER:** Mindscape PLAYERS:

> As a chapter in an epic story that's kept PlayStation fans rapt for more than a decade, this is essential. As an adventure game in its own right, it's bliss. A fine action title, no matter what.

SOULCALIBUR **DEVELOPER:** Namco Bandai

PUBLISHER: Ubisoft PLAYERS: 1-2

Yes, it's even better than Tekken. Beautiful to look at and easy to pick up and play, it also has God of War's Kratos as a playable character. Brimming with unlockables, it's a class



"Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub MotorStorm's face in its glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock PUBLISHER: Madman PLAYERS: 1-16



SEGARALLY

"To appreciate Sega

Rally you'll have to

continually remind

GRAN TURISMO 5: **PROLOGUE**

'An anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far Well worth checking out."

DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital **PUBLISHER: Sony** PLAYERS: 1-16



DEVELOPER: Sega Driving Studio **PUBLISHER:** Sega



yourself that it's a deceptively life-

like caricature of a hardcore rallying

experience. Not brain surgery, but it

delivers the fun in big muddy spades."



GRID

Colin McRae: DiRT is hot. Your lower

five. And you'll start to drool. Shame

it ditched its roots though, and the V8

DLC Codies promised has vanished."

jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take

COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

it's too boneheaded

for its own good, has few real rally cars and very little proper rallying. The original DIRT remains a far better example of a next gen rally game. More varied and far less US-centric.*

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Namco Bandai Partners PLAYERS: 1-16



DEVELOPER: Codemasters **PUBLISHER:** Namco Bandai



BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the

button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome."



thoughtless removal of splitscreen and the lack of a retry



RACE DRIVER

'This bastard rock n' roll

son of V8 Supercars and

DEVELOPER: Criterion PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16





NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

"SHIFT bucks the trend of all-American games,

and treats you as an intelligent racer. Whether you want to get under the bonnet and tinker, or even just race with what you're given, this truly is a must-have package. It's also damn pretty and very, very noisy."

DEVELOPER Black Box PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8



MOTORSTORM

"In our humble opinion MotorStorm was the best launch title on the

fledgling PS3 - and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next-gen racing as a platform upon which smart Al and terrain deformation could thrive, MotorStorm reinvented the arcade racer.

DEVELOPER: Evolution Studios PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16







"Within its niche subgenre, MC: LA reigns supreme. Well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, MC: LA manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off Need for Speed Undercover at its own game."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16



"A triumph. Harmonix has found the formula for a truly great music game - immaculate presentation, great tunes and a job for as many of your friends as possible. You wanted the best, you got the best.

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4



FIGHT NIGHT **ROUND 4**

"A spectacular game.

Deeper and more technical, Fight Night Round 4 recreates the sweet science more faithfully than ever before. Remarkable detail, incredible animation.' **DEVELOPER:** EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA



THE BEATLES: **ROCK BAND**

"From the tunes to screaming hordes of

women to psychedelic trips through acid-fuelled imaginations, Harmonix nailed it all. A landmark collaboration."

DEVELOPER: Harmonix PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-4





SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, SKATE 2 is undoubtedly one

of the greatest sports games ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime. Massively addictive."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-8







FIFA 10

"With its new momentum physics. stellar visuals, and

engaging gameplay, 2009 was the year that the FIFA franchise managed to leap the perennial hurdle that is Pro Evolution Soccer. FIFA 10 is even better. Buy it, become obsessed."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada **PUBLISHER: EA** PLAYERS: 1-20



bloody unreal."

PLAYERS: 1-2

DEVELOPER: Yuke's

DISTRIBUTOR: THO

GUITAR HERO METALLICA

"Guitar Hero Metallica improves upon GHWT in

a number ways - a more user-friendly HUD, superior presentation and more attention to detail. Great tracklist too. including 'Tuesday's Gone' by Lynyrd Skynyrd.

DEVELOPER: Neversoft **DISTRIBUTOR:** Activision PLAYERS: 1-4





STREET FIGHTER IV

SFIV is worth paying double for. Acquire on sight.'

DEVELOPER: Capcom PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

UNDISPUTED

UFC 2009

"It was trumped by

Fight Night Round 4,

but it's taken the arrivial of WWE

SmackDown vs. Raw 2010 to remind

us just how tight UFC 2009 really is. A

technical, rewarding fighter that looks

"Capcom has been in the virtual brawling business longer than

anyone, and with its vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay,

VIRTUA **TENNIS 2009**

"More of a tweak than a brand new experience,

Virtua Tennis 2009 is still the most enjoyable tennis game available today. Along with player creation tools, the biggest plus is the chance to play in the Davis Cup."

DEVELOPER: Sumo
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA PLAYERS: 1-4



DI HERO

"A real surprise package, and tough to write off as a gimmick once you've

8

played it. Utterly addictive, and great value when you consider it's chock full of great mixes you'll never hear anywhere else. An excellent game, and great for parties.'

DEVELOPER: Freestyle Games **DISTRIBUTOR:** Activision PLAYERS: 1-2

MAGIC MOMENTS



GAME: V8 Supercars Race Driver CONSOLE: PS2 YEAR: 2002

THE MOMENT:

Conrod Straight is the fastest section of Mount Panorama. That makes it the coolest section of Mount Panorama. They eventually stuck a big kink at the end because it exceeded the FIA's length for an unbroken straight - but this just made it cooler. The Chase at the end of Conrod is fastest right hand bend in Australia. and the fastest for touring cars in the world.

V8 Supercars Race Driver was not our first trip to the mountain in the series; Bathurst appeared in the last instalment for PSone, TOCA World Touring Cars, It did, however, mark the first time we could do it in a fully-licensed V8 Supercar, The experience was improved in each of the sequels, but the first time was quite special.

The finest moment, however? That had to be rounding The Elbow and blasting onto Conrod Straight.

You knew it was coming. You hit the highest point on the circuit and sped through McPhillamy Park, the quick downhill left-hander. Then it was Skyline - a descending right-hand corner and the first of The Esses. Through The Dipper, then The Elbow, then it was a flat-out burn as the track straightened out and the world

started going backwards.
It was a moment that had us grinning from ear to ear. The effect wore off after some time, but the anticipation of reaching that one point on the track where you give it the beans and don't lift off until you're doing 300km/h - at least for the first was huge. Speed thrills





FAMOUS

Constructor



We hate Godzilla. He destroys cittes





CONSTRUCTOR

Hard hat not included

orts of games from other platforms can be a blessing and a curse. Racing games across multiple consoles and PC were usually good, like TOCA Touring Car series. Strategy games were hit and miss. A hit was Command & Conquer. A miss was Constructor, though not without trying. Like many strategy titles, its Achilles' heel was the control scheme. Trying to condense a full keyboard and mouse onto a pad with 14 buttons and no thumbsticks (we're talking pre-DualShock days) was like trying to squeeze a fighter jet into a hatchback, or making a onearmed man battle Hendrix on the guitar. This is something that developers still struggle with 10-or-so years later.

In the world of Constructor you were

control scheme

a cross between a foreman, landlord and

mayor dishing out orders as a meta-being,

66 Like many strategy titles, its **Achilles' heel was the**

for hard, physical work. The more educated tenants, who would become something 'important' were specifically labelled at a higher level in-game, and had more money to spend. It was possible to build schools in a neighbourhood, or buy a home a PC to get children out of a level 1 rut, but the 'dumber' residents were needed to become workers. A town full of snobs would get nothing done.

Of course, this is just fiction. It was a fun game at the time, an ecology using funny caricatures instead of an invisible mob that made sprawling SimCity metropolises. It tried to do something different, focussing on micromanagement than an overall world. But it was a PC port and suffered from being on a CRT screen (remember those?) with a crappy

resolution. Tiny men running around on a low-res display meant you couldn't really see much, and zooming out to take care of a ruckus on the other side of town wasn't an option. Once your plot

of land or the screen got too full the whole game would s-I-o-o-w down and was plagued with a sloppy framerate. EA/Bullfrog had the scene sewn up with *Theme Park* and *Theme Hospital*, which not only had charm but were technologically adept.

Its sequel, Street Wars, stayed on the PC – likely thanks to the tepid response. We don't imagine there was any outcry at the time. If there was we don't recall it. **Paul Taylor**

manipulating the life of various stereotypes and dealing with rival towns encroaching on your turf. Burly 'level 1' tenants paid little rent as they lived in shacks, but their offspring could become workers once their parents died. Higher-level (read; snooty) tenants would only live in mansions, but would line your pockets by paying astonishing rent. Hippies would have parties, squatters and cockroaches would take over abandoned houses. Rival 'undesirables' would set fire to buildings.

We can get deep and say that the game reflected a broad, class-based system that underlies Western culture. Lower level (less worthwhile) homeowners were only 'good'



UINFO

CONSOLE: PLAYSTATION GENRE: STRATEGY DEVELOPER: SYSTEM 3 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: UK CURRENT APPROXIMATE PRICE: \$8.45 PSN



MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

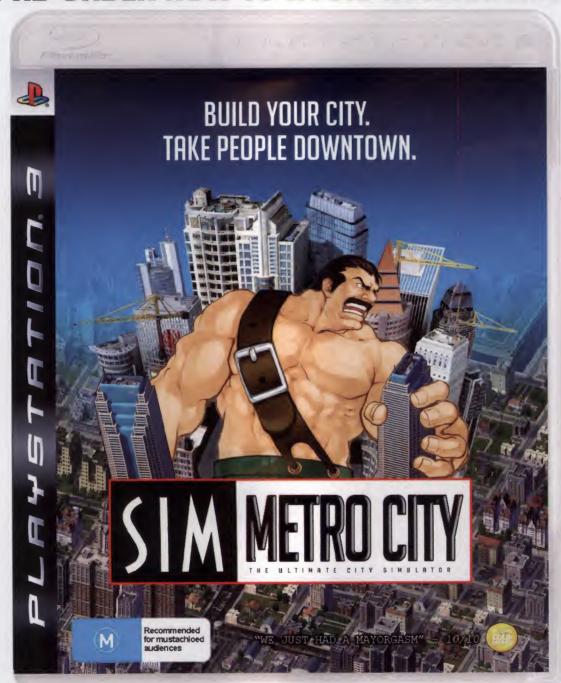
Constructor was one of the few games on PSone that had a third-party (unofficial) memory card bundled with it – roughly an extra \$30 worth of value with the full-priced game. It needed it, as the game took up 15 blocks of memory, which was the precise number of blocks on a PSone memory card. This saving was offset by the option of buying a PlayStation mouse to make things a little smoother. Those who bought the mouse could enjoy using it with roughly three other PSone games.



SANE

It should be a game!

PRE-ORDER NOW TO AVOID CONCUSSION!





Manage Youth Crime! Implement initiatives to get the youth off the streets and onto much better things - like life support...



Solve Pollution Issues! Mastermind tough-but-fair strategies to reduce automobile emissions in your enviro-friendly city.



Piledrive Poverty! Ensure that every bin and tyre stack has cash, a free radio, or a steamy roast chicken in it. Sweet!



Seize Rising Tax Rates, tuck them worryingly close to your own genitals, and slam them downwards. Audit *this*, taxman!



EXTISSU!

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Bad Company 2

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BlazBlue

Yakuza 3

Star Ocean The Last Hope: International

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MAG

...and more!

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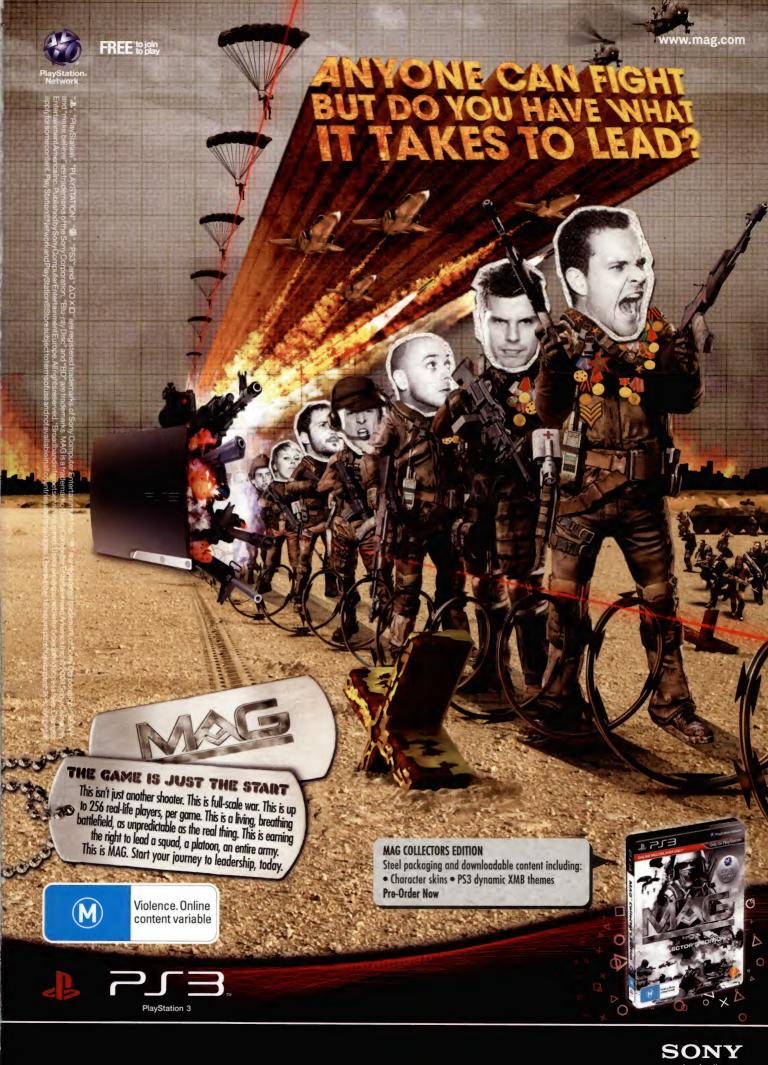
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FIRST LOOK: The world's favourite post-apocalyptic adventure continues!

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Disclaimer: OPS will do everything within its power to deliver this content next month, but we can't be held at fault if things go awry or scheduled games slip and miss our deadlinest





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